

A CHAPLAIN'S PREPARATION FOR COMBAT:  
A PRIMER ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR COMBAT MINISTRY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Strategy

by

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## ABSTRACT

A CHAPLAIN'S PREPARATION FOR COMBAT, by Chaplain (Major) Oscar T. Arauco, 99 pages

The United States Army has and will continue to train, prepare, and send chaplains on combat deployments in the global War on Terrorism. As the spiritual leaders of the United States Army, chaplains must prepare for their combat deployment and the ensuing hardships, risks, and dangers of combat. This thesis examines the doctrinal requirements for a chaplain in combat, considers chaplains in recent combat operations, and seeks to determine the best way a chaplain prepares for combat.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue.

General of the Army George C. Marshall

The backdrop of this thesis is an Army at war. Since 11 September 2001, the United States of America has officially engaged in a global War on Terrorism. This has led to a continuing series of combat deployments usually lasting twelve or more months. These combat deployments involve a relentless combination of coping with family issues while being separated by long distances, working long, long hours, enduring prolonged tedium and moral temptations, suffering in the wounding or death of friends, and enduring the continuum of personal physical dangers leading to serious injury, capture, or violent death at any unexpected moment. These combined dynamics, compounded with the extended duration of a combat deployment, heavily taxes the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stores of any soldier, including an Army chaplain. A chaplain must thoroughly prepare for such combat deployments before he or she can best serve his or her soldiers. Thus, this thesis will explore the topic of a chaplain's preparation for combat.

The scope of this thesis with regard to the American military is the United States Army. Within the United States Army, the scope is the United States Army Chaplain Corps as the strategic institution that recruits, trains, and prepares spiritual leaders of combat soldiers. Within the Chaplain Corps, the scope is chaplains themselves.<sup>1</sup> The scope of time is the present day and near-term future with their real-world operational

deployments. The scope of those involved includes the Chaplain Corps as a strategic institution, supervisory chaplains from brigade to corps level, and especially the individual unit chaplain preparing for combat.

The importance of this thesis is ultimately for the men and women who will literally fight the nation's global War on Terrorism. Combat deployments will continue in the near future, exacting their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual toll on all who serve. Chaplains by Title X of the *United States Code* governing the Armed Forces and by accepted military convention are spiritual leaders of soldiers. The Chaplain Corps, supervisory chaplains, and their unit chaplains must continue to carry this mantle of spiritual leadership with today's soldiers. Chaplains must intentionally prepare themselves for combat deployments and live out that preparation in garrison and on the battlefield. This thesis is important because it seeks to recommend specific methods for a chaplain's preparation for combat at the individual unit chaplain, supervisory chaplain, and strategic Chaplain Corps level.

The primary question this thesis will answer is, How should a chaplain prepare for combat? This primary question carries forth three subordinate questions as the framework for this thesis. First, what does Army doctrine set as the tasks, conditions, and standards for a chaplain in combat? Second, what do recent combat operations demonstrate regarding preparation or lack of preparation, and what recommendations do supervisory chaplains have to prepare chaplains for combat at the unit and strategic Chaplain Corps level? Third, with respect to Army doctrine and to what other chaplains have recently experienced and learned, how should a chaplain prepare himself or herself to accomplish spiritual leadership tasks, conditions, and standards in combat?



The underlying assumptions of this thesis include the following. First, combat deployments will continue in the near-term future and chaplains will continue to deploy into combat with their soldiers. Second, unit chaplains will continue in assignments similar to current force structure configuration throughout the Army's transformation to the modular force. Third, the United States Army Chaplain Corps will remain the proponent for recruiting, assimilating, and training unit chaplains and for preparing them for combat. Fourth, the United States Army Chaplain Corps will have the resources and means to train or coordinate training for its chaplains at the unit and institutional level.

The anticipated problems of this thesis are minimal. Army doctrine regarding chaplains and their role in combat is established, published, and accessible. Recent combat operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom have produced a number of transcribed interviews from chaplains involved in the conflict, as well as, after-action reports with their lessons learned. However, there seems to be little material on overall strategic or Chaplain Corps institutional training for an individual chaplain's preparation for combat.

The qualifications of the author of this thesis are based on two combat deployments and a peacekeeping deployment. As a United States Army Chaplain in combat, the author was honored to deploy and provide spiritual leadership to the soldiers of the First Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division, in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This experience ended less than six months prior to beginning this work. In this capacity, the author was able to immerse himself personally in the passions and fears of men and women deployed and engaged in continuous combat operations. Prior to deploying and upon redeployment, the author was able to personally learn and assist in the struggles and fears of families of fighting soldiers. In addition, the author previously had the honor to

serve in another combat deployment, Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and a peacekeeping deployment in Bosnia. These deployments further reinforced the author's belief that personally, a chaplain must prepare for combat and that strategically, the Chaplain Corps is the best institution to train and assist chaplains to prepare for combat deployments.

The motives of the author of this thesis are simple. This chaplain believes that the nation will continue to deploy men and women into harm's way for many years in continuing combat deployments in support of the global War on Terrorism. This belief along with experience in combat and peacekeeping deployments fuel this author's purpose and passion to best prepare chaplains for combat deployments. This will be the author's primary aim for the rest of his career as an Army chaplain and beyond.

Thus, if one is a United States Army chaplain today, how should he or she prepare for combat? This thesis seeks to answer that question, for this thesis will examine a chaplain's preparation for combat. It will consider current doctrine, contemporary examples of chaplains in preparation of and performing spiritual leadership in combat operations, sacred literature, and professional values. It will look specifically at the role of the individual United States Army chaplain in preparing himself or herself for combat.<sup>2</sup> It will also consider the strategic role of the United States Army Chaplain Corps in training and assisting a chaplain's preparation for combat. This thesis is written in memory of soldiers who died in action, those that will go forward in their place, and for forthcoming generations of chaplains and the soldiers and families they will serve as spiritual leaders.

<sup>1</sup>This thesis recognizes that chaplains are members of a unit ministry team or religious support team. This thesis recognizes and gives thanks to the many, many outstanding soldiers and noncommissioned officers that have served on these teams.

<sup>2</sup>From this point forward, this thesis uses the masculine gender. All of the chaplains interviewed by the Center for Army Lessons Learned later in this thesis were male chaplains. However, both male and female chaplains serve God and country both honorably and effectively. Thus, the masculine gender term is generic and meant to be inclusive of both genders. This thesis fully recognizes and gives thanks to the many, many fine women soldiers and chaplains who serve and have served faithfully.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of pertinent literature regarding a chaplain's preparation for combat discusses the ends, ways, and means of this preparation. First, Army doctrine describes the ends a chaplain seeks to achieve in the performance of his duties throughout and in the preparation for combat. Second, operational interviews, after-action reviews and lessons learned depict the actual ways chaplains prepared for combat and the lessons they have learned in recent operations. Third, sacred literature, Army values, and Chaplaincy values combine to explain the specific means a chaplain prepares for combat. Thus, the prevailing literature informs a chaplain as to the ends, ways, and means to prepare for combat.

#### Ends: Army Doctrine

As with many doctrinal manuals, field manuals set the framework of tasks, conditions, and standards regarding a chaplain's conduct in and preparation for combat. FM 1-05, *Religious Support*, states the fundamental chaplain core competencies tasks as the ends. FM 3-0, *Operations*, sets the conditions and standards for a chaplain in the performance of his core competencies. FM 4-0, *Combat Service Support*, amplifies on the effects a chaplain is seeking to achieve as he carries out his core competencies. In addition, the prior FM 16-1, *Religious Support*, sets forth the foundation of a chaplain's preparation for combat. Thus, together these doctrinal manuals set forth the ends, more specifically the tasks, conditions, and standards of a chaplain's duties in and preparation for combat.

### Ways: Operational Interviews, After-Action Reviews, and Lessons Learned

Recent combat operations have yielded a plethora of operational interviews, after-action reviews and lessons learned. In this information age, this type of information on ways to prepare for combat is plentiful in primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include transcribed interviews with actual chaplains immediately following major combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. These include interviews with battalion, brigade, division, and corps level chaplains. Secondary sources include after-action reviews and lessons learned from specific units and unit ministry teams. These sources reveal successes and challenges, accomplishments, and frustrations among chaplains in combat. Combined, these primary and secondary sources begin to reveal the ways a chaplain should pursue in preparation for combat.

### Means: Sacred Literature, Army Values, and Chaplaincy Values

In every chaplain there is, by definition, a blend of the sacred and the secular. As such, sacred literature, Army values, and Chaplaincy values combine to inform a chaplain as to the means of preparation for combat. Sacred literature speaks to the majority of chaplains on active duty today. It informs a chaplain of the greater purpose in his calling, conduct, and preparation for combat from a spiritual perspective. Army and Chaplaincy values speak to all chaplains. It informs a chaplain of the greater role in his calling, conduct, and preparation for combat from a common perspective with all other soldiers and chaplains. Thus, sacred literature, Army values, and Chaplaincy values combine to explain the means a chaplain prepares for combat.

Therefore, a literature review of primary and secondary sources concerning a chaplain's preparation for combat reveals three major trends. First, Army doctrine sets the ends and establishes purpose. Second, operational interviews, after-action reports and lessons learned reveal the ways that have and have not actually worked in preparation for combat and ensuing combat operations. Third, sacred literature, Army values, and Chaplaincy values discuss the means a chaplain prepares for combat both spiritually and physically. Combined, these sources thoroughly inform a chaplain in his preparation for combat.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

You have to go out; you don't have to come back.

Elisabeth Elliot, missionary widow

The methodology for this thesis is in three steps: analysis of doctrine, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and synthesis.

#### Analysis: Army Doctrine

The first step is to conduct an analysis of historical examples and existing present day Army doctrine. The purpose of this doctrinal review is to establish the ends. These ends are a series of tasks, conditions, and standards that the Army expects of its chaplains, regarding performance in and preparation for combat. This review of doctrine will also seek to reveal purpose along with the doctrinal methods to achieve these tasks to standard in combat conditions. Spiritual leadership tasks do not change, and standards do not change, especially the standards of God. What changes are the conditions, specifically from a garrison environment to a combat environment.

#### Analysis: Primary and Secondary Sources

The second step is to conduct an analysis of primary and secondary sources from recent combat operations. These primary sources include personal interviews from chaplains recently involved in combat operations. This methodology categorizes these primary source interviews into three groups: battalion-level chaplains, brigade-level chaplains, and division-and-higher-level-chaplains. The purpose of reviewing these interviews is to gain the perspective of succeeding organizational levels of chaplains as to

what worked and did not work in preparation for combat. Secondary sources include after-action reports and lessons learned from unit ministry teams engaged in recent combat operations. The combined purpose of these primary and secondary sources is to gain a picture of what preparation or lack of preparation looks like in actual combat conditions and the subsequent results.

### Synthesis: How a Chaplain Prepares for Combat

The third step is to conduct a synthesis of how a chaplain specifically prepares himself for combat. Based on the preceding analysis of Army doctrine as the ends and recent combat operations as the ways, this synthesis seeks to determine specific means for a chaplain's preparation for combat. This will consider the specifics of the call of a chaplain, which is the integration of a calling to be a soldier and a calling to serve other soldiers as a spiritual leader. The purpose of this discussion is to consider the integration of the spiritual and the secular in the being and fabric of a chaplain as he prepares for combat. This synthesis will then build in sequential steps the framework for a chaplain's preparation for combat. Alongside and permeating the conscience of this methodology is the role of personal experience. While not definitive, personal experience contributes as a primary source for consideration, engagement, and discussion of the sources and final recommendations. These include the individual level and proceed through strategic Chaplain Corps level recommendations to prepare a chaplain for combat.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Better love has no man than this, to lay down his life for a friend.

Jesus Christ

War is an uncommon, unnatural, and violent exchange of human wills and strengths. A peaceful, calm day can turn into chaos, blood, carnage, shock, and dismay in two blinks of an eye. So many, many times soldiers have said, “It was just another day chaplain,” “It was just another convoy, another patrol,” “like all the others.” Chaplains themselves have personally been attacked and severely wounded in combat. How do chaplains prepare themselves for the hardships, risks, and dangers of war? Departing on a six or twelve month combat deployment can be traumatic enough for marriages and children, let alone leaving the relative comforts of home and venturing into the exploding world of the nightly news.

This chapter will explore a chaplain’s preparation for combat in three steps from the perspective of ends, ways, and means. The first step is to consider ends, the goals, through a review of applicable and prevailing Army doctrine. This establishes a doctrinal framework, direction and validity to what the chaplain seeks to achieve in preparation for combat. The second step is to review ways, through primary and secondary sources from recent combat operations. Specifically, personal interviews, after-action reports and lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is to gain a real-world perspective on the doctrinal ends and theoretical ways. The third step is to consider means, how the ends and ways are best accomplished. Specifically, the means or methods a chaplain best

prepares for combat and the specific resources that contribute to that preparation. The means involve five essential and sequential elements of spiritual and physical development and growth. Each of these five elements has specific means necessary for their accomplishment, from individual through institutional means. These five elements are: character, competence, confidence, comfort, and courage.

### Ends: What a Chaplain Must Do in Combat

To begin in a brief foray in history, one can learn what success looked like for an Army chaplain in the American Civil War over one hundred years ago. Remarkably, it looks very similar to what makes an effective Army chaplain today.

Success in the eyes of the common soldier was measured by the chaplain's ability to relate to the soldier and minister to his needs. Soldiers held chaplains in high esteem for simply sharing the common hardships that all soldiers face. Often this involved living next to the soldiers in camp, eating the same bad food, marching the same long distances, giving their horses to those soldiers who needed assistance and maintaining a battlefield presence to minister to the soldiers who were wounded or dying. (Bineham 2003, 38)

The United States Army did not establish specific duties for their Civil War era chaplains. However, most of the highly regarded and successful chaplains did their utmost to comply with the following:

1. Preach whenever possible
2. Organize choirs
3. Conduct prayer meetings
4. Teach Bible classes
5. Counsel soldiers
6. Teach reading and writing skills
7. Distribute religious literature
8. Collect money for tracts, hymnals and New Testaments
9. Establish camp and post libraries
10. Supervise hospital arrangements
11. Visit sick and wounded soldiers
12. Read to the wounded and write letters home for them
13. Comfort the condemned (usually deserters facing execution)

14. Administer sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper
15. Organize Army churches or Christian Associations
16. Collect food, clothing, and medical supplies for the men
17. Perform wedding ceremonies for soldiers
18. Deliver mail
19. Maintain biographical records on the men in his regiment
20. Minister to Union soldiers who became prisoners
21. Conduct burial services
22. Correspond with families of deceased soldiers informing them of their loved one's burial location (Bineham 2003, 38)

Today the roles, responsibilities, and duties of an Army chaplain are formally established and published in the prevailing Army doctrine. The United States Army builds the foundation and framework for a chaplain's preparation for combat within its doctrinal field manuals. These manuals describe the doctrinal ends a chaplain seeks to achieve and the reason for these ends.

#### *FM 1-05, Religious Support*

The foundational FM 1-05, *Religious Support*, discusses three core competencies that chaplains must prepare to accomplish physically, emotionally, and spiritually in combat.

The first core competency is to nurture the living. This is to set the conditions for God to work within the lives of individual soldiers, collective families, or military units and to reinforce and upgrade their respective value and belief systems. The purpose is to build up a soldier, family, or unit's spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional strength prior to and during a combat deployment. Sometimes called spiritual fitness, nurturing the living includes: worship services; individual and group counseling; individual and group visitations, which are often called ministry of presence; administering religious rites, sacraments, and prayers; and other soldier, family, and unit programs.

The second core competency is to care for the wounded, sometimes specified as care for the dying. This latter portion is a critical subset of caring for the wounded. This is spiritually caring for soldiers who have been physically and/or emotionally injured or wounded. The purpose is to provide and promote comfort and courage, strength and hope in the spiritual and emotional realms, in order to foster healing in the physical and emotional realms. Care for the wounded begins with spiritual triage, which is the deliberate decision making process to determine where a chaplain is to place his spiritual energies among the wounded. This continues as a chaplain provides counsel and listens, and administers religious prayers, rites, readings, and sacraments. Among soldiers, primarily those emotionally grieving or hurting, including those showing signs of battle stress or fatigue, care for the wounded involves critical event debriefings. These are sometimes called critical incident stress debriefings, or an immediate version called defusing. This systematic discussion aims to validate and normalize a soldier's reaction to an abnormal incident, situation, or event. These discussions can involve a combination of short, immediate defusing sessions, followed by a longer, more deliberate critical event debriefing or debriefings.

The third core competency is to honor the dead. This is rendering proper tribute to the service and sacrifice of those who have died or have been killed in action. The purpose is to provide the opportunity for initial closure for those familiar with the deceased. In addition, to honor the dead provides and promotes comfort and courage, strength and hope for those who remain and must often continue the mission in similar conditions of hardships, risks, and dangers of the one deceased. To honor the dead involves memorial ceremonies and memorial services. The differences between the two

memorials focus on the role of specific religious elements in the event. The memorial ceremony involves less extensive and specific denominational elements than the memorial service.

Thus, the three core competencies tasks expected of chaplains in peace and war by Army doctrine are--nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead. To perform these tasks on the battlefield requires a chaplain's preparation for combat.

### FM 3-0, *Operations*

The Army's premier war fighting manual FM 3-0, *Operations*, discusses ways a chaplain is to conduct the three core competencies and describes the conditions and standards as measures of effectiveness.

First, this doctrine states the way a chaplain is to conduct the three core competencies. "Provide and perform religious support operations for the commander to protect the soldiers', family members', and authorized civilians' free exercise of religion" (FM 3-0 2001, 12-5). This is the standard. A chaplain is to personally perform or personally provide religious support. Thus, the primary and preferred method is for a chaplain to personally perform religious support. When this is not possible due to specific religious reasons, matters of conscience, or mission requirements, a chaplain is personally responsible to provide for religious support through other venues. These alternatives include coordination with chaplains of similar or different faith groups, lay ministers, civilian contractors, or other resources.

Second, this doctrine states the measures of effectiveness for a chaplain to conduct the three core competencies. "This includes the personal delivery of rites, sacraments, ordinances, spiritual care, religious counseling, spiritual fitness training and

assessment, religious worship services, and advice to the command on matters of religion, morals, morale, and coordination with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private voluntary organizations as appropriate and other forms of religious support” (FM 3-0 2001, 12-5). A chaplain’s chief effectiveness is in his personal, physical delivery, and performance of religious support.

In this light, a chaplain’s preparation for combat must enable and sustain his personal, physical delivery and performance of visitations, counseling and worship services, as well as, religious rites, sacraments, ordinances, and spiritual care in all manners of garrison and combat related conditions. These combat related conditions include, but are not limited to: predeployment, deployment, initial preparations, combat operations, and postcombat, sustainment, redeployment, and reintegration operations. The chaplain must prepare for personal, physical provision of religious support with physical, emotional, and spiritual effectiveness. The chaplain must personally understand and physically share the hardships, risks, and dangers of the different phases of combat operations to best personally and physically perform and deliver his religious support to serve his soldiers, families, and units.

Thus, while technologies and responsibilities abound, a chaplain is most effective in the three core competencies with his personal, physical presence on the battlefield and personal physical performance and delivery of religious support. To accomplish his core competency tasks, according to standards in all manner of combat conditions require that a chaplain thoroughly prepare for combat.

## FM 4-0, *Combat Service Support*

The Army's core support manual FM 4-0, *Combat Service Support*, adds clarity to the purpose of a chaplain's preparation for combat with regard to the three core competencies.

First, regarding nurturing the living the doctrine reads, "In preparation for missions that span the full spectrum of operations, unit ministry teams (UMTs) develop and provide religious support activities to strengthen and sustain the spiritual resilience of soldiers and family members" (FM 4-0 2003, 13-2). As chaplains prepare themselves for combat, they do so initially to strengthen and sustain the spiritual resilience of soldiers and family members. It is this intangible pillar of spiritual resilience granted by God that a chaplain seeks in nurturing the living. This is born of the strength of a chaplain's personal character, built on a foundation of lived values, and refined by successive experiences in his own preparation for combat.

Second, this doctrine discusses the intangible aspects of caring for the wounded, especially the wounded who are dying. It reads, "During the battle UMTs bring hope and strength [emphasis mine] to those who have been wounded and traumatized in body, mind, and spirit assisting the healing process. UMTs provide religious support, spiritual care, comfort, and hope to the wounded/dying. This focus of religious support affirms the sanctity of life, which is at the heart of the chaplaincy. Through prayer and presence [emphasis mine] the UMT provides the soldier with courage and comfort in the face of death" (FM 4-0 2003, 13-2 and 13-3). A chaplain seeks to bring hope and strength to soldiers and families, especially those who have been injured or wounded, physically or emotionally. A chaplain accomplishes this by personally providing religious support to

affirm the sanctity of life. Through a chaplain's personal, physical prayers and presence among the wounded, he affirms life and promotes courage and comfort when life is threatened or hangs in the balance with death.

Third, this doctrine discusses the reverent aspects of honoring the dead. It reads, "Our nation reveres those who have died in military service. Religious support honors the dead. Funerals, memorial services, and ceremonies reflect the emphasis the American people place on the worth and value of the individual. Chaplains conduct these services and ceremonies fulfilling a vital role in rendering tribute to America's sons and daughters who paid the ultimate price for their nation" (FM 4-0 2003, 13-4). Whether in the nation's military cemeteries or the battlefields on which soldiers have fallen, a chaplain must personally conduct memorial services, ceremonies and funerals to honor the dead, their service and sacrifice, reinforce the sanctity of life and affirm the value and dignity God has placed on each human being.

Thus, the clarion call sounds loudly in life and death for a chaplain to personally bring hope and strength through his physical presence, performance, and delivery of prayer and other religious support, despite the hardships, risks, and dangers of combat. Throughout a chaplain's personal, physical performance of his core competency tasks, the essence of a chaplain's preparation for combat seeks to allow him to personally perform or provide God's hope and strength to the traumatized without becoming physically or emotionally traumatized himself. Thus, the Army doctrinal standards for a chaplain to conduct his core competency tasks are personal, physical delivery of religious support through the measure of performing or providing the religious support tasks. The



conditions are all manner of garrison and combat related environments. It is according to these tasks, conditions, and standards that a chaplain prepares for combat.

### FM 16-1, *Religious Support*

A previous manual FM 16-1, *Religious Support*, begins to put forth how a chaplain actually prepares for combat. This preparation is twofold.

First, a chaplain's preparation for combat is physical. The doctrine reads, "The chaplain and chaplain assistant prepare themselves for combat like the other soldiers of the unit. This preparation must be both physical and spiritual [emphasis mine]" (FM 16-1 1995, 3-1). A chaplain's preparation for combat begins with the physical. This physical preparation must produce bodily and mental competency, a level of skill and experience, technical and tactical proficiency commensurate with a chaplain's grade. It is produced by engaging in tough training on soldier matters like the other soldiers in the unit. A chaplain must personally train and prepare in soldier tasks to survive physically on the battlefield in order to perform and provide ministry to soldiers.

Second, preparation is spiritual. Doctrine reiterates this concept and reads, "The press of time and mission requirements may tempt the (unit ministry) team to omit the spiritual preparation of prayer and devotion. The chaplain and chaplain assistant prepare themselves both physical and spiritually [emphasis mine] for combat" (FM 16-1 1995, 3-1). Twice Army doctrine has repeated that a chaplain's preparation for combat is both physical preparation balanced with spiritual preparation. A chaplain must never forget the spiritual aspects. Despite unit mission requirements, a chaplain's mission remains personal, physical performance and delivery of religious services and support. A chaplain must build up and prepare his own spiritual reserves so that he will have the spiritual

strength to perform or provide ministry when the critical time comes or to persevere in a prolonged combat deployment.

Thus, a chaplain's preparation for combat must be twofold, physical, and spiritual. A chaplain must conduct preparation for combat in a balanced manner, proficient in the physical soldier skills and sustained in and by the spiritual disciplines. He can neglect neither, but must advance both the physical and spiritual aspects of his life and soul as a chaplain prepares for combat.

In summary, a doctrinal analysis of chaplain's preparation for combat begins with the ends set forth in Army doctrine. A survey of doctrine sets as a foundation the ends a chaplain must achieve and its purpose in basic concepts.

To begin, a chaplain has three core competencies. First, to nurture the living is to strengthen and sustain spiritual resilience. Second, to care for the wounded is to bring hope and strength to those physically and emotionally traumatized. Third, to honor the dead is to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of the dead, and bring initial closure to those still living. The overall purpose of these competencies is to affirm life, provide hope and strength, and promote courage in combat or in the face of death.

To continue, a chaplain must expertly conduct his core competency tasks in all manners and phases of combat related environments through his personal, physical presence in the performance, delivery, and conduct of religious services and support. This includes a personal, physical presence in all conditions of hardships, risks, and dangers known before, during, and after combat. To achieve this, a chaplain must personally prepare for combat. A chaplain's personal preparation for combat is twofold. First, a chaplain prepares physically for combat like the other soldiers of the unit. Second, a

chaplain prepares spiritually for combat in the midst of mission requirements and physical preparation for combat.

Thus, this first step considered the ends, the goals, through a review of applicable and prevailing Army doctrine. The next step will consider the ways and means. The Army builds the foundation and framework for a chaplain's preparation for combat within its doctrinal field manuals. It is on the basis of this doctrinal foundation and framework that this thesis now turns from what a chaplain must do in combat to what chaplains have done recently in preparation for and actual conduct of combat religious support.

#### Ways: What Chaplains Have Done in Combat

This chapter first discussed the doctrinal requirements for a chaplain and a chaplain's preparation for combat as an end. This section now turns to what ways have worked and not worked as chaplains have prepared for and performed ministry in recent combat operations. Army chaplains have historically participated in all major wars and combat actions that have brought American soldiers onto the battlefields at home or abroad. The most recent combat experience for chaplains has involved high intensity combat operations of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In America's most recent and ongoing wartime experience, courage in combat ministry enables a spiritual leader to go forward and provide his personal, physical presence on the battlefield to encourage and inspire his soldiers in order to strengthen their resolve. This courage comes from a comfort level at going out into harm's way understanding the hardships, risks, and dangers involved to provide ministry. This comfort level grows from confidence built upon competence derived from actual, tough realistic training. All this, however, is built upon character and

the stronger the chaplain's character, built upon spiritual resolve, the stronger his foundation for combat ministry. The following excerpts illustrate examples of this. The following primary sources are actual thoughts, events and recollections of chaplains involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom as described in their firsthand interviews. These include a number of different types of chaplains in a number of roles and functions.<sup>1</sup> Following this are secondary sources of after-action reports and lessons learned. These too, explore how chaplains prepared for combat and what they learned from their wartime experience.

### Primary Sources: Operational Interviews

#### Battalion Chaplain Interviews

These interviews begin with battalion-level chaplains. These spiritual leaders are generally in the rank of captain, are on their first or second assignment in the Army, and most significantly at the lowest tactical level a chaplain is assigned. Thus, they are closest to the actual fighting and other struggles soldiers face on a day-to-day basis.

First, a cavalry squadron chaplain discussed the importance of preparing spiritually as well as physically for combat. He related that prior to deployment he focused on soldier issues and getting himself spiritually ready before deploying in January. He prayed and experienced the peace of God and took this peace with him upon his arrival in country. He explained that he prayed a lot for the protection of the squadron having seen the war plan develop. Still, this chaplain had also learned to integrate physically as a viable member of his unit staff. He explained that his unit conducted the staff planning process every day and that he would participate about an hour or two every day with his unit staff sections.

This squadron chaplain also had his soldier skills tested, and derived courage based on the comfort and confidence he took from competence in the soldiers tasks expected of others of his grade and experience. On the attack into Iraq, his group of vehicles lost contact with the rest of the convoy due to dusty conditions. Because he could navigate fairly well, this chaplain led the vehicles forward at night after making contact with his command via radio and was able to rejoin the main body by daylight. On another day, this chaplain was with a serial of vehicles including fuel trucks that separated from the main convoy. He made radio contact with the squadron headquarters, which was urgently looking for the fuel trucks that were with him. This chaplain once more led the separated vehicles forward and eventually the serial of vehicles caught up with and were able to refuel the squadron. On still another occasion, the squadron logistics officer asked the chaplain to take some vehicles forward up the road and meet the squadron executive officer, saying that, “the area should be secure.” This spiritual leader led a group of thirty vehicles including the forward aid station up a very congested road. His convoy was taking mortar and sniper fire and he heard a map grid coordinate over the radio where a wounded soldier was located. He stopped and took some medics with him to that grid and eventually found the vehicle with a wounded female soldier who needed evacuation. Then the squadron chaplain continued the movement and linked up with the executive officer.

There were times when this chaplain had to balance a range of emotions common in war and needed to serve as a spiritual leader in combat. He said as he watched Bradley fighting vehicles and tanks fire, he went through a range of emotions from intense fear to intense bravery to intense courage to intense apathy. It was almost like, “this is neat; this

is a cool experience.” The chaplain described his chaplain assistant hearing someone yelling from a nearby ditch. Then the battalion logistics officer told him there were dismounted enemy soldiers in the ditch. The chaplain told his chaplain assistant to kill anyone coming at them from the ditch. He also described once watching American soldiers get out of their trucks, and simply stand around and start to smoke. This chaplain went up to some of them and told them to set up their weapons in fields of fire. Then the squadron logistics officer arrived and directed more of this.

Still, this spiritual leader’s call in battle was to have the courage to fight the fears and unknowns in combat and after the battle. One night this squadron chaplain described the pitch black, low visibility and how soldiers were scared, feeling it was evil. He ministered to the soldiers, walking around. He explained to a couple of tank crews that God was using the weather to keep them safe, because the enemy couldn’t see as well as they could with their night vision goggles. When morning came and it was clear, the unit discovered that they had camped out in the middle of an arms cache and bunker network that had the enemy been able to see, probably could have hurt the unit greatly. Upon completing major combat operations, the squadron chaplain went around from tank to tank and vehicle to vehicle talking with soldiers and applying critical incident debriefing techniques. He spent about twenty minutes just talking with each crew and debriefing them out there, where the soldiers were. He later did some more critical incident debriefing with the soldiers and started weekly services on Sundays to bring things back to normal.

When asked about specific training issues, this cavalry squadron spiritual leader recommended the following:

1. Chaplains need to know how their unit fights - an infantry unit, cavalry unit, artillery unit, etc. How does the unit conduct operations, what formations do they use, and so forth?
2. Chaplains need to understand the military decision making process and commander's intent when involved in planning a battle. This way the chaplain is not just standing there hearing gibberish during the mission planning phase.
3. In addition, chaplains should be able to look at a map overlay and understand what is going on.
4. This chaplain was personally tested in the area of land navigation. He believed that even though we have global positioning systems to let us know where we are, chaplains must still understand maps and grid coordinates. (3-7 Cavalry Squadron Interview 2003)

Next, an infantry battalion chaplain related the calming presence of a courageous chaplain who is comfortable based on his confidence built upon competence. He stated that his relaxed, walking around presence helped calm some of the tension and helped to reinforce rapport with the soldiers. "I won't say it's for everybody though because there are some chaplains who probably ought not to be out there." This chaplain also described his role in ministering to and calming junior officers (platoon leaders) and teaching leadership.

When asked about specific training issues, this spiritual leader recommended the following:

1. Improved institutional doctrine and training to adequately address a chaplain's location and conduct during a variety of combat operations. He stated he got none of this out of Chaplain Officer Basic Course.
2. Chaplains need better training on the military decision making process. This chaplain believed he did not get good training on it until he attended the Combined Arms Service Staff School. This spiritual leader stated that the military decision making process must be hit hard at the Chaplain Officer Basic Course so a chaplain can get a head start on figuring out where he needs to be and what to do.
3. Chaplains need better training in the organization and functioning of the Advanced Trauma Lifesaving mission and Combat Trains Command Post so that the chaplain can better support the leaders and soldiers at those locations.
4. Chaplains need better training on how to use, communicate, and do reporting with a radio and how to communicate tactically when they do not have a

radio. In addition, chaplains need a better, standardized set of doctrinally sound report formats. (2-327 Infantry Battalion, Interview 2003)

Another battalion chaplain related the combined nature of staff work and soldier ministry. He stated that his religious support functions ranged from staff actions for the battalion headquarters to soldier ministry by walking the perimeter each morning and evening to assess the command climate. This battalion chaplain when asked about specific training issues recommended the following:

1. Chaplains need more training in Critical Event Debriefings.
2. Chaplains need to learn staff skills before the captains' career course because chaplains function as members of staffs before their career course (626 Forward Support Battalion, Interview 2003).

Another series of company grade chaplains minister in combat hospitals. These are generally more senior captains, having received specialized training to minister in a trauma environment. One such combat support hospital chaplain related positively of his training in preparation for combat, which spoke well of the clinical pastoral education program. He related that the chaplaincy has done a good job in preparing chaplains for combat by providing debriefings and training. "We are so trained that we act as opposed to react to different situations. I worked with the other unit ministry teams at Womack Hospital and got involved with patient care of the more critical care patients to get an understanding of what we would see." Realistic training of what a chaplain would experience on the battlefield was very effective (47 Combat Support Hospital, Interview 2003).



Another combat support hospital chaplain had a similar viewpoint. He related that he had conducted continuing education unit training in a hospital trauma center. This helped him minister effectively with the conditions that existed in a combat hospital. This chaplain demonstrated that a spiritual leader's task and standards of personal, physical provision of religious support do not change, but the conditions do change. This combat hospital chaplain believed that real-world training helped him know when to jump in and how to help without getting in the way of the medical professionals. He related, "It also helped me in dealing with all the emotions that were being displayed, especially in dealing with all the experiences that were relayed to us by the wounded" (47 Combat Support Hospital, Interview 2003).

Thus, these company grade chaplains at the squadron, battalion, or hospital level, closest to soldiers, had to display courage under fire and trauma based on their comfort level in the combat situation, built on the confidence that comes with competence and all the time grounded in their own individual character. They also included specific education and training recommendations to increase the competence and confidence for themselves and other chaplains. The next series of recorded interviews are of supervisory chaplains, brigade chaplains. Brigade chaplains, generally in the rank of major or higher, have supervisory responsibilities of battalion chaplains in time of peace or war.

### Brigade Chaplain Interviews

A brigade combat team chaplain stated that upon arrival to his unit in the summer before combat operations he immediately visited all battalion chaplains in the field to assess their abilities, with an eye for eventual deployment and operations in a combat zone. He noted that later deployment and combat operation success were directly related

to their realistic training at the National Training Center. Once in combat, this brigade chaplain noted that his battalion chaplains moved forward on the battlefield. “They were out where the soldiers would see them, not just in the trains with the casualties.” He allowed a chaplain to be within 250 yards of the car bomb that killed four soldiers. This chaplain was immediately able to help pick up the bodies and worked afterward with the soldiers to help them make sense of the tragedy. He noted that, “intellectually all of us know we may have to face this element of combat operations, but when it happens, it is still a shock to the system.”

Regarding training issues, this brigade combat team chaplain had the following recommendations:

1. Sustain use of chaplains in training at the various Combat Training Centers. Brigade chaplains must aggressively incorporate battalion chaplains into this training environment, as it is very important preparation for combat operations.
2. Keep battalion chaplains involved with the combat tasks of the unit. The soldiers need to see their chaplain out with them, sharing in their hardships in training along with the risks and dangers of combat.
3. Incorporate more scenario based chaplain training and keep various vignettes plugged in that replicate lessons learned from this conflict.
4. Incorporate aggressive field training exercises where chaplains and their assistants must drive, navigate, minister, and make decisions while deprived of sleep.
5. Show the chaplain how to integrate their religious support plan into the Combat Service Support matrix by adding another line to this matrix showing where to find the chaplain by phases of the operation. (3rd Infantry Division, 1st Brigade Interview 2003)

Another brigade combat team chaplain related that as the war became inevitable his unit ministry teams decided, “Pre-battle ministry doesn't begin when we are in our attack positions.” Instead, “we emphasized preparing six weeks out and to not wait for that last forty-eight hours. We were more focused at getting to all soldier locations, down

to individual tanks. We wanted to get everyone spiritually filled up before we went across the line of departure.” Again, this brigade chaplain and his battalion chaplains saw personal, physical presence and provision of religious support as essential to effective ministry (3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade Interview 2003).

One other brigade combat team chaplain involved in the stability and reconstruction operation in the central portion of Iraq discussed his thoughts on chaplain core competencies, his own preparation for combat and spiritual leadership on the battlefield.

First, he discussed the chaplain core competencies. Nurturing the living was an everyday task. From conducting worship services, coordinating worship services for soldiers of other faith groups, to checking on subordinate chaplains, commanders, fellow officers and soldiers. Nurturing was about presence, doing lots of listening and about talking things out with others whether good or bad. Caring for the wounded included those physically and emotionally hurt. For those physically hurt it was praying with broken bodies without becoming broken up oneself. He said, “Frankly, much more ministry was with those emotionally hurt from an attack, a direct fire engagement, or the loss of someone close to them.” The model, if not the exact steps, of Critical Event Debriefings was excellent. Honoring the dead was making absolutely sure everyone knew of the service and sacrifice of the deceased and that his or her life and death was noble and worthy so soldiers could perform the same mission the very next day.

Second, he discussed his own preparation for combat. “What prepared me for combat? First, I understood my call in life as a soldier and a chaplain. Second, was knowledge of soldier and staff skills learned from training and testing in different

environments and experiences. This was reinforced by prior combat experience. Third, was knowing that this was my calling in life, knowing that if I died it was God's good and perfect will for my life and my family. This provided a comfort level at knowing this is where I was supposed to be."

Third, he discussed spiritual leadership on the battlefield. In combat he considered the aspects of visualize, describe, direct, lead, and assess. Within each aspect, he discussed the importance of spiritual and physical preparation for combat to maximize spiritual impact and provided an example of what each looked like on the battlefield.

Visualize: Based on education, training, experience, situational awareness and relationships with key unit and local players, is the intuitive sense of how an action, engagement, battle or campaign will develop for better or worse, and where most likely will be the spiritual decisive point. The spiritual decisive point is where the chaplain's personal presence will most contribute to the success of the unit's mission. Often it is the same as the operational decisive point, which a commander will often identify and personally locate himself. It is at this spiritual decisive point, that the spiritual leader physically and personally provides his presence and other forms of religious support. Prior to the commencement of Operation Ivy Blizzard, the Fourth Infantry Division's operation to retake the city of Samarra, Iraq, this brigade chaplain had a sense of how the battalion chaplain of the key armor battalion would and would not minister effectively. This intuitive visualization was based on his personal military education, tactical training, experience in Samarra, situational awareness of the entire division plan and relationships with his commander, staff, and the local battalion chaplain. This spiritual leader then

considered specific techniques and procedures to maximize religious support throughout the operation.

Describe: Putting into words the vision and insight of how the action, engagement, battle, or campaign will develop, for better or worse. Explaining, clarifying, and persuading others that one's own visualization is indeed what will occur and in general terms what must be done to maximize religious support. Prior to the commencement of Operation Ivy Blizzard, this brigade combat team chaplain described to the division chaplain, brigade executive officer, armor battalion commander, armor battalion chaplain and adjacent brigade chaplain how he saw the religious support playing out during the operation and his concept of optimization for religious support coverage and chaplains involved in the operation.

Direct: Causing people to take or not take action based upon one's visualization and description of the action, engagement, battle, or campaign to take place, in order to optimize the religious support effects and outcome. This brigade combat team chaplain coordinated and directed the placement of the armor unit ministry team and his own unit ministry team accepting personal risk to optimize the religious coverage for the combat operation based upon his visualization and ensuing description of how he saw the events unfolding.

Lead: Personally and physically inspiring others to act for the attainment of a greater good, goal, or religious support mission despite the known and unknown hardships, risks, and dangers. This brigade combat team chaplain personally led his team onto the streets of Samarra on a regular basis to minister to soldiers involved in fighting in the Iraqi city. He understood the hardships, risks, and dangers involved, and adopted

prudent force protection measures, yet sought the greater spiritual good for all the soldiers involved at the spiritual decisive point.

Assess: Deliberately thinking at the conclusion of an action, engagement, battle or campaign of how things were supposed to go, how things actually went, why they went that way, what to do the same the next time a similar situation occurs and how to make things better. Upon the conclusion of Operation Ivy Blizzard and safe return to home base, this brigade combat team chaplain considered and thought through the intricate events of the operation. He then verbally briefed the brigade executive officer and intelligence officer and wrote a formal and informal report as to the decisions, events, and outcome of the religious support based on his own earlier visualization, description, direction, and leadership (4th Infantry Division, 1st Brigade Interview 2004).

An artillery brigade chaplain discussed his preparation and planning for ministry in combat as well as his integration into soldier training and staff planning. He noted the continuing balance between the spiritual and physical aspects of his ministry. He noted that at his location he was the senior military chaplain at the time and organized religious activities at the camp for about one month. He was simultaneously involved with staff planning for the operation and developed the religious support annex of the brigade's support plan. While soldiers were involved in training on individual soldiers tasks, he used that time to go around and conduct ministry to soldiers especially on the spiritual values of being a combatant. They talked about just war concepts. When they did some training on mass casualties, he discussed how the soldiers might deal with a real event of casualties. Continuing the balance of soldier skills necessary to conduct ministry, this brigade chaplain noted he did a great deal of traveling to make sure his unit ministry

teams were prepared. He had soldiers come to him during days for prayer and conducted a moment of prayer every night at staff call. In all, he believed his ministry as a chaplain fostered his unit's sense of confidence and professionalism (3rd Infantry Division, Division Artillery Interview 2003).

An engineer brigade chaplain stated there is no substitute for ministry of presence. He further said that soldiers came to look for his personal presence on the battlefield all the time. He said that he and his chaplain assistant did critical incident stress debriefings with other unit ministry teams and this worked well. He further said that critical incident debriefing training needed to be a training priority for chaplains and chaplain assistants (3rd Infantry Division, Engineer Brigade Interview 2003).

A medical brigade chaplain discussed some of the positive impacts and challenges of ministry in combat. He related that the religious piece of the deployment was very significant, with weekly Bible studies and a range of services, plus an open door in all the commands and units they worked with. It is a good opportunity to support soldiers in this environment. In the Combat Support Hospitals, one thing he wished they could improve was increasing the role of chaplains in the emergency room as a member of an interdisciplinary team as patients roll through the door. He stated that he went through training in this area in his unit. For those trained in an emergency room setting, this is an important ministry. However, not everyone was comfortable with having the chaplain involved with emergency room ministry. He was constantly trying to educate commanders and staff on this, that a chaplain is needed in the emergency room. He recommends that institutionally, the Army chaplaincy coordinate more emergency room hands on type training for their chaplains (1st Medical Brigade Interview 2003).

A support brigade chaplain discussed that the spiritual aspects of preparation for combat had a major role in his unit chaplains' preparation. Regarding the physical aspects, he was not confident of his training and role as a chaplain with enemy prisoners of war. A lack of competence in this case led to a lack of confidence. Without training, especially physical, realistic training he had a minimum of competence and thus confidence when this situation arose. This support brigade chaplain concluded his interview with his own introspective thoughts on mortality and the transcendent cause that motivates soldiers (3rd Infantry, Division Support Command Interview 2003).

Lastly, an armored cavalry regiment chaplain discussed his thoughts on chaplain core competencies and challenges in preparation for combat. He discussed his frustration at having chaplains who lacked tactical competence and how he sought to mitigate this prior to their combat deployment. He then concludes with and his overall training recommendations.

To begin, this regimental chaplain discussed chaplain core competencies. Regarding nurturing the living, he stated the job of the chaplain is to give the commander a sense of the wellbeing of his troops, the "unquantifiable health of the organization." To help determine this he spent a great deal of time talking with soldiers. He noted that, "soldiers tend to turn to eternal issues when they begin to face death and generally fall into three categories. For those who are 'unchurched' and have no religious history of any kind, they begin to wonder what it is all about and begin to talk with the chaplains. They ask what the right way is and what eternity is all about? Others have a 'heritage of church' but have lost interest for whatever reasons, and sense the comfort that they once had. They want to reestablish those roots again. Then there are those who are 'churched'



and who end up deepening their faith.” Because of all these factors, this regimental chaplain felt that the Army has more focused soldiers with strength of soul that is present even if they do not make a commitment to a particular faith group. He added, however, that sometimes commanders needed to know when a soldier was not ready for combat due to personal issues.

Regarding caring for the wounded, specifically those physically wounded, this regimental chaplain said, “Following any attacks there are actions he took to calm the nerves of the soldiers.” First, there was the ministry of presence. He believes that chaplains must physically go to the aid station or wherever the soldier is hurt and provide whatever spoken or unspoken ministry service is needed. The soldier knows that the chaplain is there and that is a great source of comfort. When the chaplain goes to an aid station, he must check the soldier’s identification tags. If the tags indicate no religious preference, the chaplain can ask the soldier if he can pray for him, or if there is something the soldier wants the chaplain to do for him. When a soldier is hurt, it is a very holy time. The chaplain is there to provide comfort, care, and compassion, but not to impose his own emotional issues on the soldier.

Regarding caring for those emotionally wounded, this regimental chaplain said, “In this instance, you have a primary and secondary concern.” These are the ones wounded and the ones providing care for them. Within twenty four hours of a soldier killed or wounded in action, all his chaplains were trained to perform critical incident stress debriefings. The regimental chaplain ensured all his chaplains received this training prior to their deployment. He described the critical incident stress debriefing as a process that helps soldiers through a traumatic stress event where coping skills are outside the

norm. It takes an abnormal situation and informs soldiers through questions and their personal recollections that they are having normal reactions to an abnormal situation. The chaplain facilitates this process.

This regimental chaplain also discussed several issues that arose regarding chaplain tactical training challenges. To begin with, his regiment had some battalions without chaplains. He did not learn until the last minute that he would receive temporary chaplains attached to his regiment for the deployment. He received new chaplains pulled from basic training units. He described that this became more like a nursemaid situation, as the new chaplains had no experience in field craft of any kind. He related that these chaplains were not tactically proficient. They did not have map reading skills, did not know how to use a global positioning system unit, had no idea what the military decision making process was all about and did not understand mission analysis. He stated that the newly attached chaplains were deficient in these and other areas.

This regimental chaplain worked to mitigate these training deficiencies. His newly attached chaplains began by reading and understanding their unit tactical standing operating procedures. This supervisor chaplain created a basic list of tasks that new chaplains needed to perform and began to train the chaplains on these tasks. He created a dual track training program. This program consisted of both the spiritual and physical aspects of preparation of combat. The first track was basic ministerial skills such as critical incidents stress debriefings. The second track was tactical military skills to address some of the training deficiencies he had observed.

Regarding overall training recommendations, this regimental chaplain noted that depending on mission requirements, chaplains might receive a warning order for a

particular mission then receive a change of mission. Chaplains must learn the flexibility skills to deal with rapid, continuous change in a combat environment. This is a psychological skill that chaplains must have. He felt the National Training Center needed to add this type of training. He also recommended that chaplains receive better training for serving as rear detachment chaplains (3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment Interview 2003).

A deputy division chaplain is generally senior among his peers in the rank of major. The deputy division chaplain of the major army division involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom noted he was very proactive in training junior chaplains. A chaplain's preparation for combat has to be both physical and spiritual. Regarding the physical aspects, this deputy division chaplain capitalized on his own past deployments and combat experience to help train his chaplains. Common task training was the focus for the division's chaplains just like the others soldiers in the unit. He said it is incumbent upon chaplains to know these field craft skills.

This deputy division chaplain reported the need for his chaplains' thorough preparation for combat. He stated that during Operation Iraqi Freedom all the division's line chaplains at the brigade and battalion-level were fired upon due to their positioning on the battlefield. Soldiers were at the same time both surprised and delighted to have the chaplains forward with them. This sometimes provided a conundrum for commanders - they wanted their chaplains with their soldiers but did not want to take a chance losing this prime combat multiplier. It is thus incumbent upon the chaplain to remove this challenge from his commander by demonstrating competence, confidence, comfort, and courage on the battlefield through sufficient preparation.

This deputy division chaplain also noted the importance of thoroughly incorporating the chaplain with the command and staff of his unit while in peacetime training to validate their value to the organization rather than waiting to discover it in a wartime situation. He stressed that the spiritual leaders in his division practice a “ministry of presence” that is, they are seen out with the troops and actively working with them. This personal, physical provision of religious support to strengthen a soldier’s spirit and resolve calls for thorough spiritual and physical preparation for combat.

This deputy division chaplain made these recommendations for future chaplain training:

1. Chaplains need more land navigation training.
2. Chaplains must develop battle skills and become thoroughly involved in the unit’s practices, rehearsals, and training exercises.
3. Chaplains must know how their unit fights and what the major equipment in their unit does and can do for the commander.

In closing, this deputy division chaplain made an interesting point. It is, “Chaplains can always be seen going to the battlefield, but never going back to the rear.” This demands much of a chaplain. It calls for a spiritual leader who has character thoroughly grounded in his spiritual call as a soldier, and as a spiritual leader who serves other soldiers as a spiritual leader. Upon this character builds tough, realistic training that intersects with the real-world and the expected contemporary operating environment. This training produces competence. In time, this competence produces confidence and both combine to yield comfort for a role few experience comfort. This ultimately demonstrates itself as courage, courage on the battlefield. This may be a moment of

physical courage in an intense dangerous situation, or the moral courage to continue forward when the idealism has faded and all, including the chaplain, are exhausted and discouraged from the prolonged stresses, dangers, and losses of combat operations. In all, chaplains go forward on the battlefield to provide personal, spiritual support and must therefore prepare spiritually and physically for combat (3rd Infantry Division, Deputy Division Interview 2003).

#### Division Chaplain and Higher Interviews

Division Chaplains maintain supervisory responsibilities of all chaplains within an Army division. The division chaplain of one of the major Army divisions involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom discussed training challenges in a deployed environment, as well as, specific spiritual and physical aspects of training and preparation for combat.

Regarding training challenges, this division chaplain stated that upon arrival to Kuwait, “It was first like a garrison mentality as we were in the camps.” He wanted the chaplains to get out of the base camp mentality. Many of the new chaplains were on their first assignment and did not understand they would be conducting mobile ministry. These chaplains would provide a religious support program out of vehicles and not a fixed chapel program. One of the exercises that moved a brigade over a hundred kilometers was a wake up call to the younger unit ministry teams.

Competence soon led to confidence and brought a level of comfort to this division chaplain. He told his subordinate brigade combat team chaplains that the upcoming battle was going to be a brigade fight and that once they crossed the line of departure these chaplains would pretty much minister from their own standing operating procedures. He told them to make their religious support decisions based on their experience and that he

trusted them to make mature decisions. This division chaplain believed he had brigade chaplains that were very capable and added the three separate battalion chaplains to each brigade combat team to serve in their administrative and logistics center. This division chaplain did not know how the battle would exactly go for each brigade, but was comfortable the brigade chaplains would locate themselves properly. At the end of major combat operations, some of the unit ministry teams had shot up vehicles and some unit ministry teams had to move out of their soft shell vehicles into armored vehicles. Some chaplains came under indirect fire; some came under direct fire. One chaplain was hit by a piece of shrapnel that penetrated into his flak jacket.

On specific spiritual and physical aspects of training and preparation for combat, this division chaplain spoke highly of critical incident stress debriefings. He related that chaplains conducted critical incident stress debriefings soon after a tragic incident. When terrorists attacked soldiers with a large bomb, the chaplains visited them within a few hours and conducted stress debriefings. This training in stress debriefing, received in the chaplain officer basic course, had been invaluable. In addition, chaplains used this training with each other. This division chaplain reported that when chaplains would come to the division headquarters in Baghdad and weapons fire was still occurring, he could see the fear in their eyes. Chaplains would talk about their fears and experiences. One chaplain related how an enemy T-72 tank trapped himself and his convoy on a blocked road. The enemy in the T-72 tank was cranking their turret around by hand and the chaplain saw his life go before his eyes, as he knew he was going to die. Just before the T-72 made it around, an American M1 tank showed up, blew up the T-72 and it disappeared. For a moment, the chaplain thought he was dead as he was in a light skinned

vehicle and they always lose against tanks. When he was telling the story, the division chaplain could see the fear in his eyes. Over the next couple of days, the division chaplain and others talked with the younger chaplain and let him rest and talk and tell his story repeatedly. The division chaplain related that several of his chaplains had experienced similar trauma and came in to talk and that he conducted informal stress debriefings with several of them. Thus, realistic, physical combat training and critical incident stress debriefings were high on this division chaplain's training recommendations in preparation for combat (3rd Infantry Division, Division Chaplain Interview 2003).

The division chaplain of another major Army division involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom discussed his challenges in physical and spiritual preparation for combat of his unit ministry teams.

Regarding physical preparation, this division chaplain described training his chaplains for treatment of trauma wounds, as combat lifesavers, in critical incident stress management, battle fatigue, stress recognition, and prevention and treatment. He stated that about sixty percent or more of his unit ministry teams had two years or less of Army experience and that temporary chaplains assigned from other duty stations filled five chaplain vacancies in his division. He described the problems he encountered integrating chaplains without recent tactical unit experience. He stated, "No matter the unit's mission, the chaplain's mission never changes; we nurture the living, we take care of the wounded and we honor the dead." These tasks remain the same, whether in garrison or combat conditions. He stated that the five temporary chaplains arrived too late for adequate training and integration. One chaplain arrived three weeks before deployment,

while another arrived five days before deployment. He also emphasized the state of their poor physical fitness readiness.

Spiritual preparation was also necessary so the chaplains of this division could have a store of strength to give to their soldiers. For instance, this division chaplain stated that one battalion chaplain was in the battle for south Baghdad and the airport.

Consequently, the unit ministry team was involved in the “clean up” of dead enemy soldiers. The battalion chaplain positioned himself so as to provide the soldiers with the “strength . . . and the presence of God.” In probably the most significant statement regarding spiritual preparation for combat, this division chaplain stated the following.

**Those chaplains who were most able to bear up under the stress of combat operations were those chaplains who had two attributes - first, they had a well-developed internal sense of call to the ministry and to the Army chaplaincy; second, they continued to theologically integrate combat operations into that sense of God's call in their life.** [emphasis mine] (101st Infantry Division, Division Chaplain Interview 2003)

One of the reasons for this thought, the division chaplain described, was that the chaplains of this division routinely moved as far forward as possible “to do what they needed to do.” He closed by stating, “Chaplains serving with soldiers in life and death situations are at the apex of their calling.” There is no greater call than to serve God as a spiritual leader with soldiers in the most critical aspect of their profession. A chaplain must indeed spiritually and physically prepare for combat (101st Infantry Division, Division Chaplain Interview 2003).

The final interview is with the Corps Chaplain of the Army corps in command during major combat operations in the conduct of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This corps chaplain discussed his corps chaplain’s office preparation for combat and conduct of combat operations across the corps.



In preparing for combat, the corps chaplain's office worked through a range of issues from administrative requirements, to future planning, training seminars, and websites. At this level, though also at other levels physical preparation for combat involves administrative issues. This corps chaplain dealt with issues regarding his staff not having the proper security clearance. This led to portions of the corps chaplain's staff not being included in the planning process and was detrimental to the team's morale. However, prior planning allowed the corps chaplain's office to request and receive multiple chaplain detachment teams from the reserve components. Prior planning also led the corps chaplain's office to certify a number of Lay Eucharistic Ministers to help mitigate the shortage of Catholic priests. These lay leaders allowed for ministry to more soldiers than the limited number of priests in the corps could allow. Anticipation of religious support requirements was difficult as the religious preference profile of unit soldiers often said "No Preference," when in fact soldiers had a clear cut preference that did not become apparent until they approached actual deployment for combat. This corps chaplain conducted training seminars for all chaplains and unit ministry teams in the corps that were very well attended and covered the following points: casualty evacuation procedures, combat trauma care, casualty feeder reporting, rear area operations, memorial ceremonies, and critical incident assistance. The corps chaplain also established a website that contained tactics, techniques, and procedures developed and trained by the corps chaplain staff to facilitate training and the efficiency of all UMTs. These included the procedures on the treatment of enemy prisoners of war, conducting ministries in mission oriented protective posture, and others.

In the conduct of combat operations, the corps chaplains stated the following issues. First, was the need for resources to cover corps wide religious support requirements. This includes additional Bibles to hand out and distribution of special meals in a timely manner. Second, was the lack of land navigation skills critical to the unit ministry teams' performance on the battlefield. With enhanced mobility of United States forces in an asymmetric battlefield, he believes it is incumbent on the unit ministry team to keep up and conduct land navigation using conventional methods including maps and compasses. Global positioning system locators were jammed and there was no constant base of skills to fall back on. Third, he noted chaplains linked up with members of their local combat stress control team to provide a read of conditions as they see it, and the locations of units and individuals in need of further care. Lastly, he emphasized the critical need to train chaplains in nuclear, biological, and chemical defensive measures and equipment (V Corps, Corps Chaplain Interview 2003).

#### Secondary Sources: After-Action Reviews and Lessons Learned

As secondary sources, this thesis considers four major after-action reports and lessons learned from the unit ministry teams of major combat units involved in combat operations and later stability operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. These reports and lessons learned are from a Stryker Battalion, the Third Infantry Division, Fourth Infantry Division, and 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

#### Stryker Battalion Unit Ministry Team

A Stryker battalion report cited lessons learned from the chaplain who operated throughout north central Iraq and performed his core competencies throughout numerous

combat and stability operations. This was to provide “soldiers throughout the battle space access to religious support” and included, “worship services, counseling, and ministry of presence, honoring the dead, and ministering to the wounded, as well as celebrating Christmas.” The chaplain prepared for these contingencies “according to the parameters we had established at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center” (RSTA Squadron, 3/2nd Infantry, Stryker BCT UMT TTPs, December 2004, 2). To conduct these core competencies tasks required chaplains to conduct spiritual and physical preparation and training for combat.

Regarding spiritual preparation, this report made recommendations on training and conducting memorial ceremonies.

Train this at home, especially during field training exercises and combat training center rotations. You do not have to conduct a full-blown service. I pulled my leaders at the company level aside at appropriate times during the scenario and discussed with them, in the field, what we would do if the casualties of that day’s mission had been for real. Go over the things they would need to do, letters to family members, preparations for the ceremony, and the effect it will have on their soldiers. (RSTA Squadron, 3/2nd Infantry, Stryker BCT UMT TTPs, December 2004, 5)

Regarding physical preparation, the Stryker battalion’s requirement for mobility is essential and requires intense physical preparation and training from all including chaplains. These are additional recommendations on training from a Stryker chaplain and conducting convoy movement.

Speed and dispersion makes it essential that chaplains be equipped and able to move throughout the battle space. This means that chaplains will need to continue to train heavily on movement skills. Convoy and convoy live fire training are a must. Actions on contact and the role of the chaplain in the event of ambush, improvised explosive device, and vehicle rollover are all very important. It is also important that we re-emphasize the need for chaplains to be properly equipped with vehicles, radios, digital battle tracking equipment and the knowledge to use them, and use them to their fullest extent. (RSTA Squadron, 3/2nd Infantry, Stryker BCT UMT TTPs, December 2004, 5)

Thus, a Stryker battalion after-action report included the need for and specific recommendations on spiritual and physical preparation for combat. One Stryker battalion chaplain related the fruits of professional competence and confidence in his role by saying, “I am convinced that one reason we did well here was because we knew what needed to be done and we had a good grasp of the overall mission and plan” (RSTA Squadron, 3/2nd Infantry, Stryker BCT UMT TTPs, December 2004, 6).

#### Third Infantry Division Unit Ministry Team

The Third Infantry Division’s after-action report after the conclusion of major combat operations in Iraq remarked that,

Overall, the unit ministry teams did an outstanding job of being proactive and supporting the command with religious support as far forward as possible. Many came under direct and indirect fire in order to provide religious support. Small arms and/or shrapnel struck a number of chaplain vehicles. Incredibly, no one was injured. God was providential in allowing them to be far forward without being seriously injured. (Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report, July 2003, 235)

This report discussed spiritual and physical issues and made training recommendations for a chaplain’s preparation for combat.

Regarding spiritual preparation, chaplains provided religious support to battle fatigued soldiers and small units suffering soldiers killed in action and wounded in action. Third Infantry Division chaplains spent a large amount of time providing religious support to small units between operations involved in close combat. However, not all this time was effective:

This activity (post combat ministry) was not adequately planned for, trained or rehearsed at home station or at the National Training Center. In most cases, chaplains fell back on orientation training received on battle fatigue in the Chaplain Basic Course. The chaplains did what they could to encourage and sustain the fighting morale of soldiers who experienced the effects of killing large

numbers of enemy soldiers at close range. An unexpected result of this religious support was the effect upon the chaplains themselves. They needed to find time to pace their ministry and ways and means to refresh their own morale and spirit. (Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report July 2003, 237)

Thus, this report made recommendations concerning training in the areas of individual and small unit battle fatigue and combat incident stress management. “The United States Army Chaplain Center and School Combat Developments Directorate, in concert with the Training Directorate, should interview Third Infantry Division chaplains and develop a more aggressive and intensive course of action for training chaplains. Training should reflect guidance for the debriefing of chaplains and ‘who ministers to the ministers’” (Third Infantry Division (Mechanized) After Action Report July 2003, 237). Interviews should occur of all chaplains returning from a combat deployment by chaplains not involved in the operation.

Regarding physical preparation, Third Infantry Division chaplains found success in the competence derived from tough tactical training, which led to confidence and a comfort level on the battlefield to effectively perform religious support. The Third Infantry’s brigade combat team chaplains were fully integrated into training at Marne Focus and the National Training Center. This included training on and the full utilization of issued equipment in the field, such as tactical vehicles and radios. Chaplains also participated in the task force and brigade combat team staff military decision-making process and mission rehearsals. Chaplains were placed well forward on the notional battlefield in training. This aggressive placement of chaplains forward at the National Training Center battlefield directly led to the chaplains’ ability to execute core competency tasks on the actual battlefield during combat operations in Iraq. Therefore, this report recommended sustaining full integration of chaplains into field training, to

include participation in the Leader Training Program prior to the National Training Center deployments.

Thus, the Third Infantry Division's after-action report included issues and successes regarding spiritual and physical preparation for combat and provided specific training recommendations at the tactical and strategic level.

#### Fourth Infantry Division Unit Ministry Team

The Army's Center for Lessons Learned published a report from the First Brigade of the Fourth Infantry Division's conducting stability operations in north central Iraq.

The report begins with a notice that chaplains must be prepared to perform their core competencies tasks immediately upon arrival into a combat zone. The enemy will not give anyone a chance to become adjusted to their environment before attacking. In order for chaplains to be able to minister effectively when first arriving in a combat zone, they must be thoroughly prepared both spiritually and physically. Regarding this, a brigade chaplain reported the following: "Within twenty-four hours of arrival in Iraq we were under mortar attack. Within forty-eight hours, an artillery vehicle hit a mine killing a soldier and father of four. Within seventy-two hours we conducted a memorial ceremony in the field with the division commander and many others present" (CALL News from the Front November-December 2004, 1). Therefore, the unit ministry team must be prepared to conduct their mission immediately upon arrival.

Related to this, a chaplain reported his immediate need upon arriving in country to be proficient in critical event debriefings to care for the wounded. The following incident occurred within forty-eight hours after assuming the position of brigade chaplain.

A soldier was killed in his vehicle by a landmine. I was the first chaplain at the scene, as the battalion chaplain was delayed due to an inoperable vehicle. The battalion commander was nearly in tears. The command sergeant major took me to talk to the maintenance section, which was scattered about in a state of disbelief & shock. I conducted an immediate defusing as learned as part of critical event debriefing training. I didn't have time to review it and didn't remember everything, but knew enough to be effective. We ended in a long prayer. I did the same with the ammunition section and coordinated with the battalion chaplain upon linkup. (CALL News from the Front November-December 2004, 2)

Thus, training and practical exercise in critical events debriefing and their related immediate defusing is crucial for chaplains in their preparation for combat.

Regarding spiritual preparation, a chaplain must have a level of courage that comes from spiritual preparation to conduct effective ministry in combat. This report noted that a chaplain's ministry in combat conditions required the chaplain to deploy to the forward most positions with soldiers. During raids, if the ambulance deployed, the chaplain went out with it. The chaplain assistant would pull security for the forward aid station while the chaplain prepared to counsel and care for the wounded. When the ambulance stayed back, the chaplain traveled with the most versatile vehicle going out. This would invariably be the commander's vehicle, as he was likely to go to a position where a soldier was hurt. Combat patrols, checkpoints, and remote guard duty presented other opportunities to minister. All these require that a chaplain understand and accept the hardships, risks, and dangers associated with his calling and the personal delivery of effective ministry.

Regarding physical preparation, one chaplain reported into his unit and deployed for combat shortly thereafter. He reported the following as minimum recommendations for training and establishing relationships prior to a combat deployment. Training recommendations include a weeklong tactical vehicle driver's course, combat lifesavers

course, cultural awareness training, and a thorough intelligence update focusing on geography and recent enemy tactics. Recommendations for relationships to develop outside the unit to support his soldiers and families once deployed include: Army Community Services Director, Army Emergency Relief Director, Family Advocacy Specialist, American Red Cross officers and the local hospital patient affairs and patient liaison officers.

Further, one chaplain reported that a chaplain's preparation for combat must include vehicle preparation. A chaplain must prepare to perform his duties anywhere there is need, whether in a unit chapel or the back of a tactical vehicle. Therefore, physical preparation for combat includes vehicle operation and readiness, realistic load plans, managed equipment, and everything tied down. This chaplain noted, "It is harder to provide religious support if one is trying to fix their vehicle and equipment." Other specific recommendations for tactical vehicle preparation include:

1. Prior to deployment, prepare your vehicle and ensure it is up to maintenance manual standards.
2. Have on hand standard numbers for vehicle parts that regularly break or degrade through normal wear and tear.
3. Get to know your mechanics and their operating procedures. Try to establish more than just a working relationship. You are going to spend a lot of time with them.
4. Know how to operate and update your communications equipment including tactical radio and digital equipment.
5. Convoy requirements for three vehicles afford an opportunity for you to help out and to get around to various parts of the area of operation.
6. For vehicle parts that are difficult to attain in garrison, create a wish list and have the national stock numbers on hand. Once in country, these items may be more attainable.
7. Conduct regular vehicle and equipment maintenance.



Thus, the Fourth Infantry Division's after-action report included the call for chaplains to be immediately prepared to conduct intense ministry. It included recommendations regarding spiritual and physical preparation for combat and provided specific training recommendations. Lastly, this report noted that to have a truly effective ministry, "The chaplain must be able to relate to those it supports. Soldiers must feel they can relate to the chaplain. The chaplain must look where soldiers are hurting the most and be there with them. To properly serve soldiers, the chaplain must 'go where the action is'" (CALL News from the Front, November-December 2004, 5). To be able to go to where the action is and effectively perform personal ministry requires a chaplain's spiritual and physical preparation for combat.

#### 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

The lessons learned report of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) was probably the most thought provoking, for it dealt with the larger chaplain mission and integration of the chaplain's call, commitment, and conduct on the battlefield. It also covered spiritual and physical preparation for combat and its consequences on the battlefield and in the hearts and minds of American soldiers.

The report began with an affirmation that a chaplain's mission remained constant throughout preparation for and the conduct of the combat operations. It was essentially the chaplain core competencies: provision of nurture for the living, care for the wounded, and honor of the dead in every instance. Chaplains provided core competency provisions as far forward as possible by delivering spiritual sustainment to soldiers in combat, providing the sacraments, and caring for them throughout hostile engagements.

The integration of a chaplain's call to ministry with spiritual and physical preparation for combat was essential.

It became quickly apparent during this deployment that those chaplains who were most able to bear up under the stress of combat operations were those chaplains who had two attributes: first, they had a well-developed internal sense of call to ministry and to the Army Chaplaincy; second, that they continued to theologically integrate combat operations into that sense of God's call in their life. In essence, they did not try to compartmentalize combat as an aberration from ministry but saw it as an integral, albeit traumatic part of that ministry. (101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Operation Iraqi Freedom Lessons Learned May 03, 16-6)

The reason this was so necessary was that chaplains were well forward in the fight. The fight was a brigade combat team fight. Therefore, the chaplains pushed forward with troop units involved in combat. This, primarily at the battalion-level, was critical and essential for the well being, spiritual maintenance, and spiritual health of the troops. The execution of religious support plan appendices to operations orders and fragmentary orders, and the provision of chaplain core ministry to all soldiers before, during and after combat operations throughout the area of responsibility were essential to the overall moral and spiritual well being of the soldiers. The forward positioned chaplains provided commanders great dividends and the chaplain teams were critical force multipliers as they provided nurture, care, and honor to the soldiers.

The division chaplain staff encouraged, trained, and mentored the chaplains of the division in order to enhance their spiritual and physical preparation for combat. The chaplains could then provide religious sustainment and encouragement to their unit soldiers in harsh combat conditions in the midst of trauma wounds, triage care, and death.

Regarding spiritual preparation for combat in this division, chaplains needed to be prepared to provide hope and strength to soldiers who were emotionally or physically

wounded in the same environments the chaplains had just experienced, as well as, honoring those soldiers recently killed in action. At several points in the war, chaplains played a critical role in units by conducting immediate critical event defusing for small groups of units who had experienced mass casualties, accidental deaths, or severe combat. In theory, a longer, more formal debriefing conducted by a combat stress control team was supposed to follow each of these short defusing briefs within seventy-two hours. However, due to the distance of forward units from these teams and constrained transportation assets in the fight, this often did not occur within seventy-two hours. Thus, the defusing briefs these soldiers received from their chaplains played a unique and critical role in mitigating the effects of severe trauma in combat. Also, during clean up of the battlefield in South Baghdad chaplains provided encouragement, sustainment and hope during a weeklong sweep of enemy dead. This vital ministry was critical in keeping the fighting strength of American forces emotionally and mentally healthy through active, spiritual strengthening, intentional physical presence, and battlefield circulation of the battalion chaplains. Chaplains also provided memorial services for all fallen comrades and continued the long-standing hallmark of this nation in honoring the dead, while infusing hope and encouragement back into the fighting forces.

Regarding physical preparation for combat, specific training in this division included the following:

1. Critical Incident Stress Management Training
2. Battle Fatigue And Stress Recognition Prevention and Intervention Training
3. Emphasized Physical Fitness Training
4. Chaplain Assistant Weapons Qualification And Maintenance
5. Nuclear Biological And Chemical Protective Mask and Defense Measures
6. Common Task Training
7. Tactical Vehicle Preventative Maintenance Checks And Services

The division trained on other topics during predeployment preparation. This included Basic Combat Lifesaver for which over sixty percent of the chaplains trained before the division deployed. All chaplains were required to have an operator license and qualification for their vehicles. Chaplains served as the primary driver while their assistants rode in the passenger seat with emphasis on protection and security for the team. In addition, physical fitness was important and emphasized. All chaplains were required to have a current Army physical fitness test passing score and not have a limiting profile. One challenge included the temporary chaplains. Of the five chaplains who were temporary change of station fills, only two arrived physically fit for the rigors of combat. However, overall the chaplains of this division spiritually as well as physically prepared for combat, which helped lead to their success in battle.

This division's report also included local and strategic training recommendations. Local training recommendations included the following. First, continuing to train during the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration phase once arriving into theater. Second, identifying and training to specific chaplain mission requirements for the area of operation. Third, chaplains conducting training per the specific division standing operating procedures while utilizing doctrinal aids such as the pocket manual RB 16-100. In essence, the division continued to emphasize and orient training around the chaplain core principals: Nurture the living, care for the injured/wounded and honor the dead.

Strategic training recommendations included the following: "The United States Army Chaplain Center and School, Combat Training Centers, Major Commands, Installation and division level training in peacetime must fully integrate the stress of

combat operations into their training models.” Further, brigade chaplains must personally assist battalion chaplains in developing the traits of integrating combat operations into that sense of God’s call in their life.

In summary, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Lessons Learned report covered the integration of a chaplain’s call, commitment, and conduct. It then recommended how to best prepare spiritually and physically to personally perform religious support in combat. One closing thought was,

Though often overlooked, the fact remains that the role of the unit ministry team is essential to maintaining the fighting edge of combat troops. The chaplain and assistant brought the presence of God into literally horrific situations, that helped maintain in many the sanity, resolve, and hope they needed to continue to execute their missions in the face of such unspeakable sights, sounds, and smells. The intangible became tangible in the presence, courage, and fortitude of many forward chaplains as they endured and overcame along side their soldiers. (101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Operation Iraqi Freedom Lessons Learned May 03, 16-6)

#### Means: How a Chaplain Prepares for Combat

This chapter first began with a discussion of the doctrinal requirements for a chaplain and a chaplain’s preparation for combat as an end. Then this chapter considered recent combat operations to determine what ways have worked and not worked as chaplains have prepared and trained to perform ministry in combat. Now this section will turn to means. Specifically, how does a chaplain actually prepare for combat?

The answer is both descriptive and prescriptive. Referring back to the doctrinal standards, the chaplaincy has core competency tasks that chaplains must perform to standard in various combat related conditions. To do so a chaplain must first prepare for combat. The doctrinal methodology for this preparation combines spiritual and physical readiness and develops both in a concert of intertwined tunes. Thus, this section considers

sacred literature, Army, and Chaplaincy values and combines them with physical preparation to inform one of the specific means. The means of preparation for combat that a chaplain pursues is being and action in five essential and sequential areas of development and growth necessary to achieve the ends. These five areas are: character, competence, confidence, comfort, and courage.

## Character

### Growing in God's Call as a Soldier and as a Spiritual Leader

A chaplain's preparation for combat begins with character. Personal character must first prepare for combat by growing as a soldier and second prepare for combat by growing as a spiritual leader to serve other soldiers. Of the five areas of a chaplain's preparation for combat, at its base and core is character. Therefore, the bulk of this discussion will focus on character.

Character is generally formed at a young age and informed throughout a person's life. This is the complex of mental and ethical traits marking and often individualizing a person. This is a chaplain's main or essential nature. The ideal is that the chaplain has a strong, positive, moral, and spiritually healthy character. While formed at an early age, character is informed, developed and grows with age. A chaplain's ministry in combat begins with character. This is character forged inside the heart that accepts a series of unique callings: as a man of God, as a man of God who serves as a soldier, and as a man of God who serves as a spiritual leader to serve other soldiers. These three are inter-related and must be vibrant, dynamic, and growing in a chaplain's life and character to be truly effective in combat. This section on character will address the latter two aspects of character as directly informed by sacred literature, specifically the Bible,<sup>2</sup> Army values,

and Chaplaincy values. First, this section will consider personal preparation as a soldier and second, personal preparation as a spiritual leader to serve other soldiers. While holistically interlaced by definition within an Army chaplain, these two distinct elements must be equally accepted and incorporated into a chaplain's life, being and fabric.

### Growing in God's Call as a Soldier

The first main realm in which a chaplain's character must grow is personal preparation as a soldier. At its core, this personal preparation as a soldier has a spiritual aspect. For a chaplain must accept and assimilate into his heart soul and mind, his distinct call as a soldier and grow in this calling. A chaplain as a soldier is called by God to fulfill a specific purpose in God's good, loving, and perfect plan.

### Growing in God's Call as a Soldier: Biblical View of Soldiers

One who adheres to the Bible can refer to passages where God talks about soldiers and the relationship of God and soldiers. A specific example of a soldier's personal relationship with God being not only a source of strength, but also intertwining the physical and spiritual dimensions of soldiering comes from Israel's warrior-king, David. In Psalm 144 David speaks of the interrelationship between the spiritual and physical aspects of soldiering.

Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. Part your heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the mountains, so that they smoke. Send forth lightning and scatter the enemies; shoot your arrows and rout them. Reach down your hand from on high; deliver me and rescue me from the mighty waters, from the hands of foreigners whose mouths are full of lies, whose right hands are deceitful. (NIV Bible, Psalm 144)<sup>3</sup>

Scripture speaks once again in 2 Samuel 22, and in a parallel passage in Psalm 18, of the hands and minds of a warrior interlacing with to the heart and spirit of a warrior who submits himself to God and does not shy away from the difficult aspects of battle.

He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great. I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were all destroyed. I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. You made my enemies turn their backs in flight and I destroyed my foes. They cried for help, but there was no one to save them - to the LORD, but he did not answer. I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets. (NIV Bible, 2 Samuel 22)

There are also a number of examples in the Bible where Jesus Christ speaks of soldiers or to soldiers in a favorable light. These include: Luke 7:1-10 where Jesus speaks highly of a soldier's faith, Acts 10:1-8, 21-23, when Luke speaks well of a soldier's obedience and Acts 27:1-13, 30-44, where Luke again speaks nobly of a specific soldier's decision.

Thus, seen in Scripture is the interlacing of the hands and minds of a warrior to the heart and spirit of a warrior. So similarly, a chaplain must see his mind, body, heart and soul as an interwoven fabric for God's good and God's glory. Only in this full acceptance of his role as a soldier, can a chaplain begin to accept his role as a God's servant, a soldier who serves others soldiers and so begin to prepare for combat.

#### Growing in God's Call as a Soldier: Incorporating Army Values

A chaplain must also incorporate into his being the values of the identity he takes on when putting on the uniform. In the Army, these values are clearly stated and defined. If a chaplain does not consider these values as fully applying to him, he leaves himself on the doorsteps of the brotherhood of war. Chaplains must incorporate these Army values.



*Loyalty* is the faithful bond to and for the good of a person, unit, or the Army as a whole. It is the rope that binds the actions of soldiers and their chaplains together and causes them to support one another, suffer with, and serve one another, their leaders, family, and country despite the hardships, risks, and dangers of combat. Often this leads to sacrifice, sometimes the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of a brother in arms, one's unit, family, or country as a whole.

*Duty* is the legal and/or moral obligation to fulfill one's obligations, to accomplish one's assigned or implied role, task, or mission. Each soldier, including chaplains, must do what needs to be done, with and without orders, to accomplish the unit's mission. Each leader, among them the chaplain, must be able and willing to envision the outcome, foresee obstacles and seize the initiative to accomplish the unit's mission.

*Respect* is the treatment of others with the dignity and respect endowed by their Creator, God. It is the chaplain's ability to see beyond surface warts and scars to accept and value other people, yet without feeling obligated to embrace all of their ideas. Respect begins with a fundamental understanding that all people possess worth as human beings because they are created and sustained by God.

*Selfless service* is the giving of oneself for a cause greater than oneself. It is the chaplain placing duty and love for others before his own personal safety, needs, comfort, or desires. It is the soldier's driving force to endure hardships, risks, and dangers because of love for fellow soldiers, family, and country. It is the foundation of a leader's will to win and a chaplain's will to serve.

*Honor* is living a life that is pleasing to and reflects God. Honor upholds the Army values and all that is right and true. Honor holds up a person's soul in victory or

defeat. Honor begins with honesty with one's self and continues with truthfulness and sincerity toward others in words and actions. Honor is informed by God and enables a soldier or chaplain to live out the life God intended for him.<sup>4</sup>

*Integrity* is the price a soldier, chaplain or a unit places on themselves and their honor. Integrity begins by doing what is right, legally and morally even when no one is looking or others do wrong. Chaplains are sometimes called the conscience of the command. Integrity is the "moral compass" reflecting God within people. Integrity is the basis for trust and confidence between leaders and subordinates that must exist among members of the brotherhood of arms.

*Personal courage* is the combined spiritual, physical, moral, and emotional fortitude to accept fear as a fact of life and move forward to accomplish one's role, task, or mission. Physical courage accepts and overcomes hardships, risks, and dangers in combat for the love of others and mission accomplishment. Moral courage overcomes fears of personal rejection and other nonphysical harm while doing what is right even if unpopular or unseen. Both forms of courage are fueled by and further the role God has for a chaplain's life.

Thus, through Biblical examples and Army values, the Army chaplain can and must fully accept and absorb into his character his calling as a soldier and the fact he is indeed a soldier - just like the other soldiers in his unit. Without this acceptance, a chaplain is only a spiritual man dressed in green. This full physical, emotional, mental and spiritual acceptance of being a soldier with its related hardships, risks, and dangers, duty, honor and sacrifices is the foundation of a chaplain's preparation for combat.

### Growing in God's Call as a Spiritual Leader

First, a chaplain must accept his calling as a soldier. Second, for a chaplain's character to prepare for combat he must fully accept and assimilate his distinct call as a spiritual leader, and specifically a spiritual leader to serve other soldiers within the Army construct and culture. Combined with a chaplain's acceptance of his call as a soldier, a chaplain who pastors his congregation of soldiers becomes a spiritual leader. This is more than a title, for to serve as a spiritual leader is to lead, to actively exercise leadership in peacetime and in combat that is spiritual in nature and foundation.

Accepting one's call as a chaplain realizes the unique call as an Army chaplain versus a local church pastor. A chaplain must not be simply a local church pastor in a soldier's uniform. He must not merely think himself as shepherding a congregation in green. He must know himself as a servant of God who serves as a spiritual leader to other soldiers in the role of an Army chaplain. With this as a basis, a chaplain, especially a Christian chaplain can have the heart, mind, and soul to serve Jesus Christ and soldiers regardless of the hardships, risks, and dangers. He can embrace and thirst for the personal, physical knowledge, experience, and understanding of the common hardships, risks, and dangers his soldiers face daily. He can love his soldiers, seek to come alongside them as another soldier and serve them as their pastor, thus making him a spiritual leader. A chaplain who accepts his call as a soldier and serves other soldiers as a spiritual leader can willingly, fully understand, train for and prepare for the hardships, risks, and dangers associated with his profession, and be willing to accept them. Wholeheartedly accepting this call makes a Christian chaplain even more of a spiritual leader for he serves Christ and his country with a love for both and the soldiers set before him.

## Growing in God's Call as a Spiritual Leader: Biblical View of Chaplains

The Bible relates examples of the role and actions of spiritual leaders of yesterday, that Army chaplains can learn from today. In the Bible, spiritual leaders are generally called priests. This does not refer to a denominational rank or allegiance, but rather to a general role in mediating between God and the people.

Examples of the role and function of priests of yesterday that spiritual leaders can learn from today begin in the beginning, in Genesis 14. Following one of the first battles recorded in Scripture, the chaplain comes to the commander, serves him practically, in this case with food and drink, blesses and encourages him and reminds the commander of God's primary role in defeating the enemy.

After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand. (NIV Bible, Genesis 14)

In the Biblical Book of Numbers 31 God speaks again to the role and actions of spiritual leaders following a battle. The people of Israel had concluded a successful battle against the Midianites. As the combat troops return, the Bible reads, "Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went to meet them [the returning warriors] outside the camp. Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone into battle, 'This is the requirement of the law that the LORD gave Moses'" (NIV Bible, Numbers 31). Thus, after a battle the spiritual leader walks alongside his commander and meets with their soldiers. The chaplain then reminds the soldiers of their commitment and obedience to God. The priest of old and chaplain of today serve as the conscience of the

commander and the unit, calling them to commitment and obedience to what is right and true according to God's word and Army values.

In Deuteronomy 20, Israel is going to war and God speaks to them through His spiritual leaders to personally, physically pass on specific exhortation. It reads, "When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. He shall say: 'Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory'" (NIV Bible, Deuteronomy 20). Thus, the spiritual leader of today as related in Scripture begins with physically coming forward to where the combat soldiers are physically located and personally address them. The chaplain is to acknowledge what he knows to be true of the situation, in this case the impending battle against enemies. Then the chaplain exhorts his combat soldiers to be strong and have courage and not to give in to the natural temptation of mind numbing fear. In closing, the chaplain encourages his soldiers by telling them the reason they are to have courage, namely that God is with them, fighting with them and for them to give them victory. The spiritual leader cannot rely on an email, a general word of the day or the past week's sermon to bring the spiritual effects that God desires of hope and strength to soldiers before battle. Thus, the chaplain must physically come forward and personally deliver his words of truth, strength, and courage to the soldiers.

In Joshua 3, one sees the employment of chaplains, spiritual leaders, to support a shaping operation, namely a deliberate river crossing. First, the officers exercise battle

command in describing the ensuing operation to the people and then directing their movement based upon the priests location with the ark of the covenant.

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan (River), where they camped before crossing over. After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. (NIV Bible, Joshua 3)

Next, the commander directs his chaplains to move on ahead of the people in this river crossing operation and stand in the river. The commander then synchronizes this action by describing to the people that the water flowing downstream will be cut off, which is the intended friendly, non-lethal effect.

Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.

And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”

Joshua said to the Israelites, . . . “And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD - the Lord of all the earth - set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.” (NIV Bible, Joshua 3)

God then proceeds to work through his spiritual leaders to enable the river crossing to occur. This takes some physical courage on the part of the priests as they are exposed to risks and dangers from the turbulent waters and hostile enemy. However, these chaplains accept their call, role and mission in life without question and God consequently blesses the entire command and nation. Scripture then reads,

So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing.

. . . So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground. (NIV Bible, Joshua 3)

Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the LORD had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. (NIV Bible, Joshua 4)

In a different instance later in Joshua 4, one sees the employment of chaplains to support a decisive operation, namely a deliberate attack upon a large fortified enemy strongpoint. This was the urban operation of the day with cities being totally surrounded by fortress like walls and strong prepared defenses. However, God has a plan for his commander, chaplains and soldiers to employ non-lethal and lethal targeting in a synchronized deliberate attack.

Then the LORD said to Joshua, See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in. (NIV Bible, Joshua 6)

The commander, Joshua, again exercises battle command by describing and directing his course of action to his spiritual leaders and people involved in the deliberate attack. The priest element has an armed guard force going before them and a rear guard behind them as force protection. The priests are not combatants themselves in this attack, but conduct non-lethal targeting through their trumpets.

So Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it." And he ordered the people, Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD.

When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. (NIV Bible, Joshua 6)

The main effort occurs on the seventh day of the attack. The people join the priests' non-lethal targeting of trumpets with their own synchronized shouting. Scripture records that the cumulative weight of the attack soon destroys the city defenses and the attack is successful.

On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!"

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. (NIV Bible, Joshua 6)

In summary, through a survey of Scripture regarding the priests of past days one can learn principles for chaplains as spiritual leaders of today. First, chaplains serve their commander as needed, physically with sustenance or emotionally with encouragement from God. Second, spiritual leaders personally walk alongside their commanders and soldiers. They remind them of their commitment and obedience to God, serving as the conscience of the commander and the unit. Third, chaplains exhort their soldiers to be strong and have courage in combat, for God is with them fighting with them and for them to give them victory. Fourth, spiritual leaders require physical courage as they can be exposed to risks and dangers from natural and manmade dangers. Lastly, while such exact types of urban operations as the conquest of Jericho may be rare today, chaplains seek full integration into the battle plan of commanders through non-lethal effects, synchronized with other non-lethal and lethal effects of other formations. Chaplains



continue to move physically ahead of some elements, but always with a force protection element for security. Thus, spiritual leaders are an integral part of any plan and the subsequent success of the operation. This calls for chaplains who have accepted their call as soldiers, and as soldiers who serve other soldiers as spiritual leaders of today.

#### Growing in God's Call as a Spiritual Leader: Incorporating Chaplain Values

Similar to Army values, the United States Army Chaplain Corps has adopted its own subordinate and distinct set of sacred values to overlay and inform a chaplain's heart and mind. These values inform the chaplain that he is a soldier who serves other soldiers, that he is indeed a spiritual leader. To see these values in context it is fitting to state the vision and mission of the United States Army Chaplain Corps. The Chaplain Corps' vision is "Religious Leadership for the Army: Courageous in Spirit, Compassionate in Service." The Chaplain Corps' mission is threefold: first to provide religious support to the Army across the full spectrum of operations, second, to assist the commander in ensuring the right of free exercise of religion, and third, to provide spiritual, moral and ethical leadership for the Army and its culture. In its quest to pursue this vision and accomplish its mission the Chaplain Corps has adopted sacred values for itself as an institution and for each of its member chaplains. These are the Chaplaincy's Sacred Values:

*Spirituality* is seeking to know God as God intended for men to know Him, to provide meaning and direction in one's life. It pursues a life above a level of spiritual mediocrity and seeks to model this for the congregation of soldiers the chaplain serves.

Spirituality rests at the essence of a chaplain's soul and finds expression in the chaplain's willingness to share in the hardships, risks, and dangers of combat.

*Accountability* is holding oneself and others to the moral and spiritual high ground in every area of life. Accountability recognizes that within the brotherhood of arms is a brotherhood of believers who will hold one another up in morality, integrity, and spiritual uprightness. Accountability informs and supports the Army value of integrity and honor.

*Compassion* is love expressed in word and deed. Compassion moves the chaplain's heart to serve and keep serving his soldiers when he is tired or discouraged. Compassion finds expression in giving oneself to soldiers and their families.

*Religious leadership* is spiritual truths and authority modeled wisely and courageously. Chaplains express religious leadership with the authority of organizational norms, as a subject matter expert, or more often with referent authority. There may be many leaders in an organization, but only one is the religious leader proper, and that is the chaplain. Thus, the chaplain must recognize and exercise religious leadership in his role as a spiritual leader.

*Excellence* is doing one's best for God's glory. Chaplains pursue excellence in all things personal or professional. This is a life that lives above the level of mediocrity, low standards, and expectations in all physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life.

*Diversity* is respecting the differences of others. Diversity recognizes God's many expressions with men while adhering to God's immutable attributes and standards set forth in Scripture. Diversity respects and values each individual that God has made, but does not necessarily condone or accept each individual's actions or beliefs.

In summary, God's call is for a chaplain to serve as a soldier and as a spiritual leader to serve other soldiers. Through Biblical scripture and Chaplaincy values, the Army chaplain can and must fully accept into his character his calling as a soldier who serves other soldiers. Without this acceptance, a chaplain will never begin to understand, let alone accept, his unique calling before God. A chaplain who fully accepts this calling fulfills a specific purpose in God's good, loving, and perfect plan. A chaplain who embraces this call into the fabric of his very being is a shepherd to a special congregation known as soldiers. As a soldier himself, he must also grow to be a warrior like many other soldiers grow to be warriors. Thus, a chaplain can be seen as a spiritual leader. A chaplain becomes a spiritual leader as he serves his soldiers as a soldier himself, in the face of the possible costs related to the hardships, risks, and dangers of being a warrior. This full physical, emotional, mental and spiritual acceptance of being a soldier who serves other soldiers with its related hardships, risks, and dangers, duty, honor and sacrifices, is another block in the foundation of a chaplain's preparation for combat.

#### How to Grow in God's Call as a Soldier and as a Spiritual Leader

Character does not develop in a vacuum. It is informed and transformed through a myriad of relationships, hardships, and time. Similarly, the character of a spiritual leader does not come from the seminary or pastorate fully matured. Instead spiritual growth of character calls for spiritual growth. This is especially true in the Army Chaplaincy where the normal hardships, risks, and dangers of a soldier are compounded with the calling to serve soldiers and not self in these types of situations first and foremost. The character of

a chaplain must grow and inform the call God has given him. This character growth comes in three basic forms: individual, collective, and mentoring.

Individual spiritual growth of character is personal in nature, as a chaplain meets God within the solitude of his own understanding, surroundings, and experiences. Institutions, such as the Chaplain Corps can provide opportunities, resources, occasions and facilitates for individual character growth. The specifics of individual spiritual growth in character as a soldier and as a spiritual leader rest with the chaplain himself.

Collective spiritual growth of character occurs when chaplains of the same heart and mind come together for a period of time or frequently enough with other like-minded hearts. These groupings can also include those who are not chaplains, but preferably are with those of a similar lifestyle and calling. Collective spiritual growth provides encouragement, admonition, and accountability among one another. Within the Chaplain Corps collective spiritual growth is fostered, but not mandated through various opportunities, resources, occasions, and facilities. These spiritual growth opportunities can be conducted on a regular or irregular basis.

Mentoring is a special and unique relationship among two or more chaplains that focuses on the spiritual growth of a less seasoned chaplain or chaplains. Mentoring is usually driven by the more experienced chaplain and seeks to provide a forum for spiritual growth of character. This relationship can be formal or informal and usually entails regular meetings or communications. These occasions can include a formal or informal structure. The mentoring relationship can last from a few weeks to a lifetime. The Chaplain Corps can provide guidelines, encouragement, models, and resources for mentoring, but for the most part should not regulate these special relationships.

Thus, spiritual growth of character for a chaplain, a spiritual leader, occurs in three general settings: individual, collective and mentoring. Any of these or a combination of these forums serves to inform the character of the soldier who is a servant of soldiers.

### Summary of Character

To truly achieve the doctrinal standards for chaplain core competency tasks in various combat conditions as discussed in Army doctrine, a chaplain must be prepared for combat. At the core of a chaplain's preparation for combat is character. This character forms at an early age, and is informed or grows spiritually throughout a lifetime and in service as a chaplain. This growth of character begins with a fundamental acceptance of God's call to be a soldier. This acceptance is informed through a biblical view of soldiering and personally incorporating United States Army values. Further growth of character continues with an acceptance of God's call to be a spiritual leader whose purpose is to serve other soldiers. This acceptance is also informed through biblical examples of prior religious leaders who went into combat with their commanders and soldiers, and also by incorporating the United States Army Chaplaincy values. Lastly, spiritual growth of character occurs in different settings. Spiritual growth can occur individually, collectively or through a mentoring relationship. From a strategic or institutional point of view, each of these avenues for spiritual growth can be fostered and facilitated by the United States Army Chaplain Corps.

## Competence

Chaplains must meet the Army doctrinal standards of their core competency tasks in various combat conditions. To do so, a chaplain must prepare himself for combat. This preparation develops both spiritual and physical readiness as prescribed in established doctrine. The means of preparation for combat for a chaplain are five essential and sequential areas of development and growth necessary to achieve the ends. The first area discussed was character.

The second major area in a chaplain's preparation for combat is competence. Of the five areas of a chaplain's preparation for combat, competence crosses the line from spiritual to physical preparation. As stated earlier in FM 16-1 *Religious Support*, "The chaplain and chaplain assistant prepare themselves for combat like the other soldiers of the unit. This preparation must be both physical and spiritual" (Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 16-1 1995, 3-1). Thus, the chaplain must pursue physical preparation to go along with the fabric of his more spiritual preparation for combat. The goal of this physical preparation is professional competence. Competence is the cognitive acknowledgment of mental and physical skills. Competence relates to thought processes and is the act or process of knowing, including both awareness and judgment. In this case, a chaplain's competence means knowing that he knows what he knows, and knowing that there is still much he does not know.

Professional preparation that leads to competence takes on three primary forms, education, training, and experience.

First is education. Education is primarily but not exclusively the realm of the classroom. The Army Chaplain Center and School is the chief proponent for Army

chaplain education. This school education must continually educate chaplains to personally, physically perform their chaplain core competencies according to the standards of Army doctrine in various combat conditions. This education is best when taught from the perspective of varied contemporary operating environments by instructors who have recently served in those environments. This education must include real-world case studies, field problems, practical exercises and talks from those with recent, relevant experience in situations graduating students will soon face. The standards in the classroom must be high with student failure a possibility with consequences. It is difficult to make this education too challenging, as few classroom environments will adequately represent the hardships, risks, and dangers of combat. The United States Army Officer Education System as a whole must continue to educate and account for the unique role and contributions of the Chaplain Corps. This includes resident attendance at all military education schools to include the Command and General Staff Officers School at Fort Leavenworth and the War College.

Second is training. Training is primarily but not exclusively the realm of the field. This can be the field as in an assigned unit, or as part of an educational course, or literally in the field. Training, especially tactical training, seeks to take formalized, general education and turn this into finely crafted tactics, techniques and procedures that become intuitive reflexes and reactions. Individual chaplains and chaplains as members of a unit staff and larger unit ministry team must learn, exercise, and drill these tactics, techniques and procedures until they become second nature. The goal of tactical training for a chaplain is to produce a level of skill and experience, technical and tactical proficiency commensurate with grade, just like the other soldiers in the unit.

Chaplains must also train as members of their unit staff. This serves the chaplain in several realms. It informs the chaplain as to the hardships, risks, and dangers his unit is facing to best minister to them. This allows the chaplain to understand what his commander and fellow staff officers are doing and planning to ensure he integrates his ministry as part of the overall unit plan. In addition, the chaplain can anticipate and plan according to where he believes the spiritual decisive point will be and where the chaplain should place his spiritual resources and himself. Training for chaplains on special staffs must also include the higher level military art as the chaplain progresses in grade and position. This includes, but is definitely not limited to, effect based operations, employment and synchronization of various tactical and operational elements, and joint, multinational and interagency religious support operations.

Third is experience. Both education and training in practice forms experience. Experience begins to combine the science and art taught in the classrooms and field into an informed collective set of mental models and muscle memory. Experience is the practiced form of education and training and begins to form the next major area of a chaplain's preparation for combat, confidence.

### Confidence

The third major area in a chaplain's preparation for combat is confidence. Confidence emits from and is informed by competence. Confidence continues to move from character and the spiritual dimensions of preparation for combat to physical preparation and begins to include elements of emotional preparation. In general, confidence is the cognitive acknowledgment and appreciation of successful application of mental and physical skills. With competence brought about by military education,



training, and experience, a chaplain's cognitive and emotive faculties begin to overlap thus forming the groundwork of confidence. This groundwork is further enhanced by continued application, which gives opportunities to test competencies. The cycle of education, training, and experience continues throughout a soldier's career and throughout a spiritual leader's time in service. Education continues to broaden and deepen the chaplain's knowledge base. Training, especially hard, hands on tactical and field training, continues to refine a chaplain's mental and physical skills. In addition, experience, the wellspring of confidence, continues to accumulate wisdom and refine future application of military competencies. Thus, as a chaplain invests in technical and tactical competence, he is rewarded with the ensuing fresh air of confidence. This confidence leads to the next major area of a chaplain's preparation for combat, comfort.

### Comfort

The fourth major area in a chaplain's preparation for combat is comfort. The ensuing fresh air of confidence that comes from a chaplain's invested time, skill, and energy into technical and tactical competence blooms into comfort. Comfort is the emotive acknowledgment of confidence based on successful application of mental and motor skills. This is similar to confidence but carries a chaplain forth into the emotive realm. The emotive realm characterized by, appealing to or expressing emotion. Within a chaplain who is prepared for combat, the emotive realm of comfort is solidly built upon confidence, which itself is built on competence and his own informed and steadfast character.

This emotive of comfort then lays the groundwork of even greater actions in the affective realm. This comfort in an adverse, even dangerous environment is tested in

applications of various natures, perhaps in training exercises or deployments. Application now gives opportunities to rest in one's competencies. The fruit of spiritual preparation, classroom education, and tough field training begins to bud. Through experience, the spiritual leader accumulates wisdom and further refines the future application of his competencies, each in turn increasing his comfort level in what was once a very uncomfortable environment such as combat.

Education and training continue to build a chaplain's competence and thus confidence level, thus increasing his capacity for comfort with hardships, risks, and dangers. Education and training is a never ending process in a spiritual leader's career. Education and training continues to broaden the horizons of a chaplain, challenging him with myriads of possibilities and laying out the theoretical groundwork for future combat application. Specialized education and training refines a chaplain's competence in cognitive and physical skills, thus adding to his confidence and the budding fruit of comfort in difficult situations. Specialized education and training can deepen the well of a chaplain's existing knowledge base and add to his comfort level in uncomfortable situations. To the degree specialized education and training intersects with the real-world they increase a spiritual leader's competence, confidence and comfort level in performing his core competencies in various conditions of hardships, risks, and dangers such as combat. This comfort level in very uncomfortable situations lead to the last element in a chaplain's preparation for combat, courage.

### Courage

The fifth major area in a chaplain's preparation for combat is courage. The budding of comfort now becomes the full fruit of courage in combat. Courage does not

come at once; it is built on character and an accumulation of applied competence, confidence, and comfort. Courage does not automatically retain a high level. It is fed and reinforced by education, training, application, and experience. Courage is the culmination of cognitive and emotive realms expressed on the battlefield. It is often an external expression of emotions such as love or hate associated with a specific idea or action. Courage accepts the risks associated with the profession and calling of a military spiritual leader and is willing to accept them. This courage can be physical in nature or moral. It can be courage for the moment of crisis or over the long, weary months of a combat deployment. Courage must rest and rebuild from time to time to maintain and increase its resiliency. It is in the moment of physical crisis or moral testing that courage is willing to do something one would not have done prior to his heightened comfort level, because of confidence, based on competence, and all the time built on spiritually informed character. Thus, courage becomes the sweet ultimate fruit of a chaplain's preparation for combat.

In summary, this chapter began with a discussion of the doctrinal requirements for a chaplain and a doctrinal perspective of a chaplain's preparation for combat as an end. It discussed the tasks, conditions, and standards of a chaplain's personal, physical performance of religious support. Next, this chapter reviewed ways chaplains prepared for combat in recent combat operations through primary and secondary source literature. This review produced examples of positive and negative results regarding a chaplain's preparation for combat. This included discussion from a number of different levels of chaplains, their preparation for combat, observations as to the results of that preparation and recommendations to future chaplains preparing for combat. This chapter then turned to the means, how a chaplain specifically prepares for combat. This began with a review

of sacred literature, Army and Chaplaincy values to instruct chaplains as to the means to inform character. A chaplain's character is his foundation. Built on this foundation is competence in the military arts and sciences commensurate with grade. Competence leads to confidence in a chaplain's heart and mind in performing religious support in varying military conditions. Confidence leads to comfort in physically performing religious support in the conditions of hardships, risks, and dangers inherent in combat. Comfort ultimately leads to courage to serve soldiers as a soldier, by ministering to them as a chaplain through personal, physical presence on the battlefield and performance of religious support. This courage can last through shorter or longer moments of trauma, duress, and discouragement. Thus, this chapter conducted an analysis of doctrine, an analysis of primary and secondary source literature and a synthesis of these sources: sacred literature, Army, and Chaplaincy values to determine the specifics of a chaplain's preparation for combat. This is how a chaplain prepares for combat.

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<sup>1</sup>These primary source interviews were conducted in Iraq and transcribed by the Center for Army Lesson Learned at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In order to keep this thesis unclassified specific names are not used and specific quotes used sparingly and not attributed to a specific chaplain. Within these constraints, each interview is reflected accurately in the chaplain's own words and tone. The complete interviews are available through the United States Army Center for Army Lesson Learned.

<sup>2</sup>This thesis recognizes that not all chaplains adhere to the Bible. This thesis also recognizes that the vast majority of Army chaplains are endorsed by Christian faith groups, with the Bible being an important if not essential part of their faith.

<sup>3</sup>All scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by International Bible Society. Use of either trademark requires the permission of International Bible Society.

<sup>4</sup>This thesis recognizes and heartily believes that chaplains are soldiers and must fully accept their role and calling as soldiers. This reference and others like it refer to soldiers as a whole and to chaplains specifically.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this thesis is in three parts. First, is an overview of the contemporary operational environment that the Chaplain Corps finds itself in with respect to a chaplain's preparation for combat. Second, are specific recommendations for unit training and strategic level education in a chaplain's preparation for combat. These recommendations are in addition to the recommendations of others chaplains in chapter four. Third, are specific recommendations of topics for further consideration and research.

#### Contemporary Operational Environment

First, is an overview of the contemporary, operational environment that the Chaplain Corps finds itself in when considering how to prepare chaplains for combat.

Chaplains are by definition men of peace. Many come from the pastorate. The normal church paradigm is of a pastor faithfully feeding his sheep spiritually on Sundays and other days of the week in various forms, but normally from within the confines of the church facilities. Other duties in the pastorate normally involve administration, counseling, developing and conducting church programs, but all again from within the confines of the church facilities. While all this has application in the military, it can also be where chaplains begin to go wrong, by limiting their ministry to their new facilities in an Army chapel and office. Being a chaplain means conducting all these activities outside the chapel and office. There will always be a place to conduct them from within these facilities, but the essence of being an Army chaplain is executing all aspects of the

pastoral role with the congregation itself, wherever it is, whenever it is, in the motor pools, training in the field, or in combat.

Against this backdrop, the chaplain core competency tasks remain the same; the standards for these tasks remain the same, but the conditions change. For some chaplains this transition from the pastorate to the chaplaincy leads them to the conditions of a training unit environment, for others a garrison unit assignment, and for still others a combat unit assignment and subsequent combat. Moreover, to say in combat, is not to say within the walls of a safe and secure base camp, transplanting all religious services from home station to the security of the base camp chapel. In combat for a chaplain means, wherever soldiers are patrolling, raiding, walking, living, and dying. Of course, a chaplain does not normally offer religious services in the middle of a hostile engagement. Still, a chaplain is not afraid of the potential for a fight, improvised explosive device, or enemy ambush because he knows his calling from God is to serve soldiers as a soldier. All this is keeping in mind that ministers are normally by nature men and women of peace, and war is an uncommon, unnatural, and violent business.

From former pastors, missionaries, seminarians and others, the Chaplain Corps seeks to mold spiritual leaders for today's Army. Spiritual leaders serve soldiers as a soldier. To borrow from and build on Plato's concept of leadership, the true spiritual leader inspires the spirit and the act of following by turning the souls of others toward some good purpose (Kolenda 2001, 21). When overlaid against Army missions in the Byzantine tapestry of evil that can be any city street or desert highway near Mosul, Tikrit, Bagram or places yet unknown, spiritual leadership takes on daily life and death dimensions. A spiritual leader provides spiritual leadership wherever the soldier and his

leaders are located. This could be in a base chapel, in a field hospital, on a combat patrol or logistics convoy. Spiritual leaders are leaders in combat. Spiritual leaders know that the true essence of being a warrior is in the heart, mind, and soul. Those who follow Jesus Christ are dedicated to the cause of Christ and this includes defeating Satan and evil in this world. This evil includes the many woes that fall upon soldiers. While Satan and evil will truly never be defeated until Christ returns to earth, a spiritual leader seeks to advance the kingdom of God while on earth. Thus, those who are spiritual in foundation and motivation and actively lead others, exercise spiritual leadership.

To be effective, a spiritual leader must personally and physically see, feel, smell, hear, and taste the hardships, risks, and dangers of his soldiers. This crucial, personal experience is so he can fully know and understand the life and death struggle of combat on his soldiers. This is how chaplains lead from the front. For a spiritual leader whose character is intuitively trustworthy, is technically and tactically competent in his role, and cares enough for his soldiers to share their hardships, risks, and dangers can turn the soul of a soldier from darkness and discouragement toward a common good purpose. He can inspire the spirit and actions of mission, comradeship, and perseverance through his creative and relentless pursuit of vision, and the will to win despite the obvious and intuitive hardships, risks, and dangers of combat (Kolenda 2001, 23).

The spiritual leader's major weapon in any environment is prayer, humbly interceding to God on the behalf of his soldiers and leaders. Prayer is the premier form of non-lethal targeting. Prayer is best when specifically communicated for a specific person or persons, such as soldiers and commanders, and for a specific time, place, and purpose. Prayer leads to non-lethal and lethal effects. Further, a spiritual leader's weapon is



physical presence and personal provision of religious rites, sacraments, ordinances, prayers, words of encouragement, Scripture reading, and other religious services, that make up the components of nurture the living, care for the wounded and honor the dead. Often, a chaplain's personal and physical presence on the battlefield can bolster the courage, comfort, and confidence of the soldiers he serves. Thus, in this contemporary, operational environment the Chaplain Corps seeks to educate, train, and prepare effective spiritual leaders as it prepares chaplains for combat.

### Recommendations

Second, are the following specific considerations and recommendations for unit and strategic level education and training in a chaplain's preparation for combat. These recommendations are in addition to the many fine recommendations of other chaplains in chapter four of this thesis. The United States Army Chaplain Corps must continually be in the business of educating, training, and preparing spiritual leaders who actively exercise spiritual leadership in the service of their soldiers, country, and God. These spiritual leaders carry forward the flame of spiritual leaders of the biblical era, in concert with their commander and religious support mission. This education, training, and preparation must be in the areas of a chaplain's character, competence, confidence, comfort, and courage.

### Character

Spiritual growth can occur individually, collectively or through a mentoring relationship. From a strategic or institutional point of view, the Chaplain Corps can foster and facilitate each of these avenues for spiritual growth in the following manners. First,

the Chaplain Corps can provide opportunities, resources, occasions, and facilities for individual character growth. Second, the Chaplain Corps can foster, but not mandate, collective spiritual growth through various opportunities, resources, occasions, and facilities. These spiritual growth opportunities can on a regular or irregular basis. Third, the Chaplain Corps can provide guidelines, encouragement, models, and resources for mentoring, but for the most part should not regulate these special relationships.

### Competence and Confidence

Once a chaplain has fully accepted his calling as a soldier and as a soldier serving other soldiers, technical and tactical military training adds competence, which leads to confidence and then comfort. Training can take place that allows a chaplain's character as both a soldier and spiritual leader to develop concurrently. However, for the most part, training does not build character but only allows it to be expressed in confidence. It is this confidence that chaplains seek with training. Tactical training for company grade chaplains is tactical and technical in nature. For example, how to operate a military vehicle and radio, how to drive at night with night vision goggles, how to navigate on the battlefield, how to survive chemical attacks, and the other recommendations in chapter four. All these are tactical and technical skills necessary on the battlefield, but that also allow a spiritual leader's character to express itself in confidence. Tactical and technical training for field grade chaplains also includes understanding the higher level military art. This includes: brigade and above tactical and logistical considerations of military operations, employment and sequencing of various tactical and operational assets, operational level and considerations of tactical operations, and joint, interagency and multinational religious support. All this serves two purposes. First, to understand what a

chaplain's fellow staff officer and field commander are doing or planning to conduct. Second, that a chaplain can anticipate and plan according to the spiritual decisive point, and know where he should place himself and his spiritual resources. Thus, technical and tactical military training adds a competence level to company grade and field grade chaplains.

In general, training is for certainty and education is for uncertainty. Yet, it is for the uncertainty of future military operations and religious support requirements that a chaplain's education must address and further prepare him for combat through increasing his competence. The United States Army Chaplain Center and School must continue to conduct effective chaplain education that has the following characteristics. First, educate chaplains to personally, physically perform their chaplain core competencies according to the standards of Army doctrine in various adverse combat conditions. Second, begin education at a level common to all students, but enables different ends according to the skills, experience, desires, and drive of the student. This enables all students to begin and move forward in their education process from a common reference point, yet allows for personal drive in self education. Third, conduct instruction from the perspective of various contemporary operating environments. Utilize instructors who have recently served in those environments. Bring in such instructors for specific classes, panels, or lectures as necessary. Fourth, continually intersect education in the classroom with the real-world to provide reasons to learn. Include real-world case studies, field problems, practical exercises and talks from those with recent, relevant experience graduating students will soon face. Apply instruction and provide examples of application in real-

world environments. Fifth, set and maintain high standards and make student failure a possibility with consequences.

The United States Army Officer Education System must continue to provide, enhance, and pursue formal officer education that integrates chaplains in education along with their operational peers. These peers will be the commanders of the future that chaplains must develop special relationships with in the present. The Officer Education System must continue to account for the unique role and contributions of the Chaplain Corps in various schools. The Army Chaplaincy must continue to pursue chaplains' attendance at resident Command and General Staff Officers Course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The Army Chaplaincy must also proactively maintain chaplain attendance at the Army War College.

Thus, training and education produces competence, which leads to confidence, confidence in oneself and one's equipment, and in each other, and then joins with character to produce a level of comfort.

### Comfort and Courage

The heart of character that desires to serve soldiers as a soldier on the battlefield joins with the mind and hands of technical and tactical competence. This leads to a greater degree of confidence that a chaplain should and can actually perform his role as a spiritual leader in combat. This then leads to a level of comfort and ensuing courage.

To promote this level of comfort, the United States Army Chaplain Center and School and installation training programs must continue to conduct effective specialized education and training to refine a chaplain's competence in cognitive and physical skills, thus adding to his confidence and comfort in combat situations. Examples of this

education and training include the Combat Care Casualty Course, Combat Lifesavers Course, Unit Ministry Team Survival Course, Critical Event Debriefing training, and practical Casualty Notification Team training. Such specialized education and training deepens the well of a chaplain's existing competence and confidence base and add to his comfort level in uncomfortable situations such as combat.

As a chaplain experiences and actively engages in the hardships and risks of training in garrison, his competence and confidence continues to develop. As his confidence develops, his comfort level with all manner of hardships, risks, and dangers develops. This leads to courage, the fusing together of desire, ability and will. This equates to physical and moral courage in garrison, and physical and moral courage in combat. As a chaplain's character informs his heart that he must be out with his soldiers, he has the tactical and technical competence and confidence that comes with it to survive and thrive on the battlefield. Now the chaplain can give himself, his life, his future with his family, all that God has been blessed him with, all he has strived for and obtained, to his soldiers in life and in death and all in between. A chaplain must be all that a pastor is and more. He must do all a pastor does and more--for he must do it under the many violent threats of a hostile, thinking enemy.

In summary, courage on the battlefield fundamentally begins with and is based on character. Character under fire as lived out is courage under fire in life, severe trauma, and to death. Therefore, a chaplain's ministry in combat begins with character. This is the character forged inside the heart that accepts a series of unique callings: as a man of God, as a man of God serving as a soldier, as a man of God serving as a spiritual leader who serves other soldiers. These are inter-related and must be vibrant, dynamic, and growing

in a chaplain's life and character to be truly effective in combat. Built on this character is competence. Competence comes from unit and Chaplain Corps strategic level education and training. From competence derives confidence. Growing from confidence is comfort. Finally the full bloom of all these is courage on the battlefield. This is how a chaplain prepares for combat.

### Topics for Further Consideration and Research

Third, are the following topics for further study on the strategic implications of a chaplain's preparation for combat.

1. The Chaplain Corps' Strategic Level Educational Program in Support of a Chaplain's Preparation for Combat
2. The Chaplain Corps' Strategic Level Training Program in Support of a Chaplain's Preparation for Combat
3. The Chaplain Corps' Strategic Level Force Structure in Support of a Chaplain's Preparation for Combat
4. The Chaplain Corps' Strategic Level Combat Developments in Support of a Chaplain's Preparation for Combat
5. The Religious Support Decisive Point
6. The Army Warrior Ethos in the Chaplain Corps at the Strategic and Unit Level
7. A Chaplain's Preparation for Combat at the Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Level
8. Religious Support in the Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Level
9. Effect Based Spiritual Leadership
10. Effect Based Spiritual Triage in a Crises Situation
11. Effects Based Chaplain Education Program for the Chaplain Corps, at Strategic and Unit Level in Preparation for Combat.
12. Effects Based Chaplain Training Program at the Chaplain Corps Strategic and Unit Level in Preparation for Combat.
13. Effect Based Religious Support Operations at the Chaplain Corps Strategic and Unit Level.
14. How Battalion Chaplains Prepare Soldiers for Combat
15. How Brigade Level Chaplains Prepare Battalion Chaplains to Prepare their Soldiers for Combat
16. How Division and Corps Level Chaplains Prepare Brigade Chaplains to Prepare their Chaplains for Combat

This chapter concludes this thesis. It covered three main areas. First, was an overview of the contemporary operational environment that the Chaplain Corps finds itself in with respect to a chaplain's preparation for combat. Second, were specific recommendations for unit and strategic level education and training in a chaplain's preparation for combat. Third, were recommended topics for further research and consideration. These topics pertained to the strategic implications of a chaplain's preparation for combat and more. May God bless the reader of this work.

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